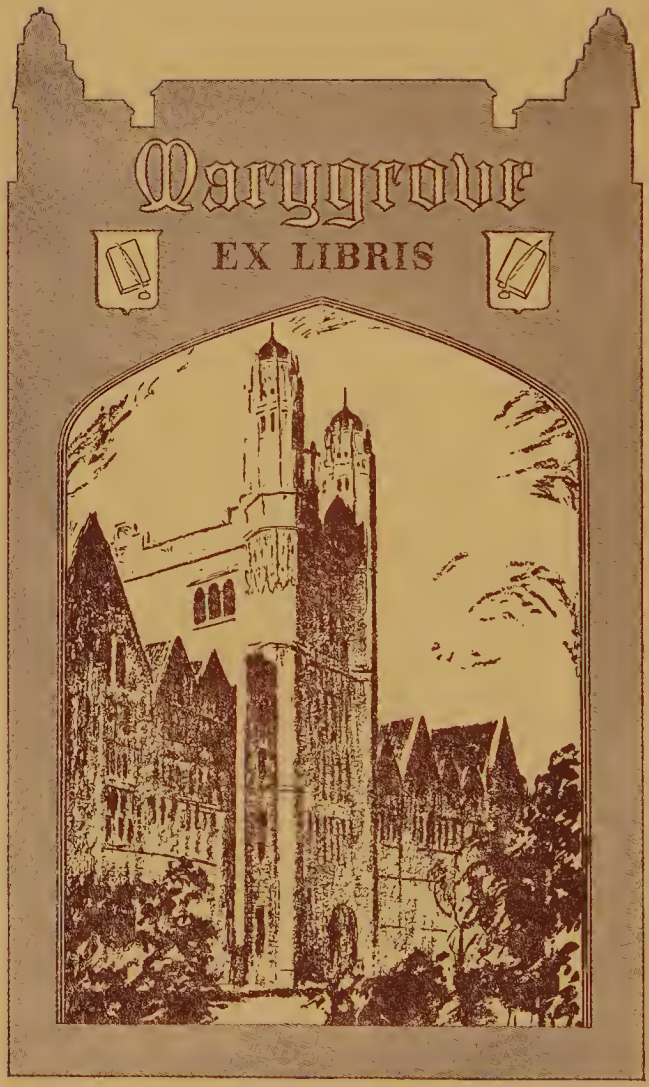
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WAYFARING

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WAYFARING

by

ALICE MEYNELL

LONDON
JONATHAN CAPE 30 BEDFORD SQUARE

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Of a series of articles written by Alice Meynell, George Meredith wrote: 'Readers with a turn for literature have noticed of late a column once weekly in the Autolycus basket of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, considering it princely journalism. The essays have the merit of saying just enough on the subject, leaving the reader to think. They can be read repeatedly. The surprise coming to us from their combined grace of manner and sanity of thought is like one's dreaming of what the recognition of a new truth would be. Conceivably, during her term of scholarship, the writer was fastidious to the extreme degree, but that is only now shown in a style having the "walk of the Goddess"; and when she speaks her wise things, it is the voice of one standing outside the curtain of the Oracle, humbly among her hearers.'

Of these essays, with later revisions of her own, a selection is here to be found – some of them for the first time in book-form. A few of her familiar verses, proper to Wayfarings, supplement the prose.

WAYFARING

*

With mimicry, with praises, with echoes, or with answers, the poets have all but outsung the bells. The inarticulate bell has found too much interpretation, too many rhymes professing to close with her inaccessible utterance, and to agree with her remote tongue. The bell, like the bird, is a musician pestered with literature.

To the bell, moreover, men do actual violence. You cannot shake together a nightingale's notes, or strike or drive them into haste, nor can you make a lark toll for you with intervals to suit your turn, whereas wedding-bells are compelled to seem gay by mere movement and hustling. I have known some grim bells, with not a single joyous note in the whole peal, so forced to hurry for a human festival, with their harshness made light of, as though the Bishop of Hereford had again been forced to dance in his boots by a merry highwayman.

The clock is an inexorable but less arbitrary player than the bellringer, and the chimes await their appointed time to fly – wild prisoners – by twos or threes, or in greater companies. Fugitives – one or twelve taking wing – they are sudden, they are brief, they are gone; they are delivered from the close hands of this actual present. Not in vain is the

sudden upper door opened against the sky; they are away, hours of the past.

Of all unfamiliar bells, those which seem to hold the memory most surely after but one hearing are bells of an unseen cathedral of France when one has arrived by night; they are no more to be forgotten than the bells in 'Parsifal.' They mingle with the sound of feet in unknown streets, they are the voices of an unknown tower; they are loud in their own language. The spirit of place, which is to be seen in the shapes of the fields and the manner of the crops, to be felt in a prevalent wind, breathed in the breath of the earth, overheard in a far street-cry or in the tinkle of some blacksmith, calls out and peals in the cathedral bells. It speaks its local tongue remotely, steadfastly, largely, clamorously, loudly, and greatly by these voices; you hear the sound in its dignity, and you know how familiar, how childlike, how life-long it is in the ears of the people. The bells are strange, and you know how homely they must be. Their utterances are, as it were, the classics of a dialect.

Spirit of place! It is for this we travel, to surprise its subtlety; and where it is a strong and dominant angel, that place, seen once, abides entire in the memory with all its own accidents, its habits, its breath, its name. It is recalled all a lifetime, having

been perceived a week, and is not scattered but abides, one living body of remembrance. The untravelled spirit of place – not to be pursued, for it never flies, but always to be discovered, never absent, without variation – lurks in the by-ways and rules over the towers, indestructible, an indescribable unity. It awaits us always in its ancient and eager freshness. It is sweet and nimble within its immemorial boundaries, but it never crosses them. Long white roads outside have mere suggestions of it and prophecies; they give promise not of its coming, for it abides, but of a new and singular and unforeseen goal for our present pilgrimage, and of an intimacy to be made. Was ever journey too hard or too long that had to pay such a visit? And if by good fortune it is a child who is the pilgrim, the spirit of place gives him a peculiar welcome, for antiquity and the conceiver of antiquity (who is only a child) know one another; nor is there a more delicate perceiver of locality than a child. He is well used to words and voices that he does not understand, and this is a condition of his simplicity; and when those unknown words are bells, loud in the night, they are to him as homely and as old as lullabies.

If, especially in England, we make rough and reluctant bells go in gay measures, when we whip them to run down the scale to ring in a wedding –

bells that would step to quite another and a less agile march with a better grace – there are belfries that hold far sweeter companies. If there is no music within Italian churches, there is a most curious local immemorial music in many a campanile on the heights. Their way is for the ringers to play a tune on the festivals, and the tunes are not hymn tunes or popular melodies, but proper bell-tunes, made for bells. Doubtless they were made in times better versed than ours in the sub-divisions of the arts, and better able to understand the strength that lies ready in the mere little submission to the means of a little art, and to the limits – nay, the very embarrassments – of those means. If it were but possible to give here a real bell-tune – which cannot be, for those melodies are rather long – the reader would understand how some village musician of the past used his narrow means as a composer for the bells, with what freshness, completeness, significance, fancy, and what effect of liberty.

These hamlet-bells are the sweetest, as to their own voices, in the world. When I speak of their antiquity I use the word relatively. The belfries are no older than the sixteenth or seventeenth century, the time when Italy seems to have been generally rebuilt. But, needless to say, this is antiquity for music, especially in Italy. At that time they must

have had foundries for bells of tender voices, and pure, warm, light, and golden throats, precisely tuned. The hounds of Theseus had not a more just scale, tuned in a peal, than a North Italian belfry holds in leash. But it does not send them out in a mere scale, it touches them in the order of the game of a charming melody. Of all cheerful sounds made by man this is by far the most light-hearted. You do not hear it from the great churches. Giotto's coloured tower in Florence, that carries the bells for Santa Maria del Fiore and Brunelleschi's silent dome, does not ring more than four contralto notes, tuned with sweetness, depth, and dignity, and swinging one musical phrase which softly fills the country.

The village belfry it is that grows so fantastic and has such nimble bells. Obviously it stands alone with its own village, and can therefore hear its own tune from beginning to end. There are no other bells in earshot. Other such dovecote-doors are suddenly set open to the cloud, on a *festa* morning, to let fly those soft-voiced flocks, but the nearest is behind one of many mountains, and our local tune is uninterrupted. Doubtless this is why the little, secluded, sequestered art of composing melodies for bells – charming division of an art, having its own ends and means, and keeping its own wings for unfolding by law – dwells in these solitary places. No

tunes in a town would get this hearing, or would be made clear to the end of their frolic amid such a wide and lofty silence.

Nor does every inner village of Italy hold a bell-tune of its own; the custom is Ligurian. Nowhere else as in Genoa did the nervous tourist complain of church bells in the morning, and in fact he was made to hear an honest rout of them betimes. But the nervous tourist had not, perhaps, the sense of place, and the genius of place does not signal to him to go and find it among innumerable hills, where one by one, one by one, the belfries stand and play their tunes. Variable are those lonely melodies, having a differing gaiety for the festivals; and a pitiful air is played for the burial of a villager.

As for the poets, there is but one among so many of their bells that seems to toll with a spiritual music so loud as to be unforgotten when the mind goes up a little higher than the earth, to listen in thought to earth's untethered sounds. This is Milton's curfew, that sways across one of the greatest of all the sea-shores of poetry – 'the wide-watered.'

*

A SINGULAR love of walls is mine; perhaps because of long living in London, with its too many windows and too few walls, the city which of all capitals takes least visible hold upon the ground. Walls, blank and strong, reaching outward at the base, are a satisfaction to the eyes teased by the inexpressive peering of windows, by that weak lapse and shuffling which is the London 'area.' In a world where iron rails multiply and walls grow fewer it may be asked: has some early legend of affection – memory of the day when a wall, signed with seasons, visited by the alighting of seedlings and drift of sunny air, was known at close quarters to the eyes of a child – has such a tradition of antiquity much to do with the love of vanishing walls? For railings with their open-work are all unwelcome, although the season of spring has for one of its charms the translucent open-work of trees that lets the skies pass through, and fails to take them in its net. Spring threads increasing green with brightening skies, scatters the skies, leads them through the woods, shows them the way of the hollow lanes, and lets them walk the garden of the earth.

Needless perhaps to say, the new Italy and the new Rome hankered after railings. To have railings and

uno square has not been the least among the national aspirations. And in nothing was the recasting of Rome achieved with a more definite purpose than in the demolition of walls. It is a painful thing to their constant lover to see them hewn down where they were wont to gather houses close in fortified village and hill town. Florentine walls – we have seen these fall; and not only the lofty and brown town walls that kept the fire-flies out and were touched on the country-side by blossoms on the branch, but the lesser walls of narrow paths. No longer do these climb with cypresses, and toss the sunshine into the shade, so that the grey stones look clear as water, and all shadows shine. Even a northern summer bandies the hollow lights from red wall to red wall, and this inter-radiance is the beauty of all strait streets.

There is no kind of landscape, however busy, where the sun does not shine with a fine simplicity upon simple walls. White walls are the earthly clouds. They withstand the sun. For, as the sunshine that would go astray in the blue is brought to a halt upon a brilliant cloud, so the sunshine that would go wide into the distances of green landscape, turns against the barrier of the fort or town, the long sea-wall, or the wall of the small white house. They arrest the rays in ranks, turn them like a flying host,

and show to the coloured world how white looks in the kindred light.

The masonry of man has strengthened some countries with those white boundaries. They make the simplicity of a ploughed and planted countryside. Where the land is a land of rocks the walls lay a strong and orderly grasp upon the peaks, and look calmer than eternal hills. Who has not felt the locks and bars of the simple horizontal walls of Monte Cassino, as you first see the hill from a distance, on the way to Naples? The height is lost, and the solitude gone, when you find the station at the foot; but from afar, among the fragments of Apennines, the unbroken long walls of man have an effect of mastery upon the sharp summits. Length rather than height seems always to be the proper beauty of a wall, and therewith thickness, which – in their measure – the door must have, the window-frame, the window-bar, and everything that man adds to the world. With a pardonable fanaticism I am inclined to answer when there is a question as to orders of architecture, 'Oh I am for the thick!' as though all history, shape, spirit, and evolution, height and aspect, were, beside thickness, of little moment.

Even little white walls have their strange and significant looks in the country in a summer early morning, or on the border of the woods. On the

white side of a closed house to the east Corot shows the thrill of dawn as Wordsworth saw it there rather than on his hills. Even the darkened walls of the Thames side served that mysterious turn. 'Dear God! the very houses——' The familiar word never stood ready, in its place, in more transfiguring light. So stands many a white wall in all the lights of day. White are the walls that smoothly lock the broken hills; white was the 'peaceful citadel,' white the little town by river or sea-shore. White are such towns in their bays upon the profound Adriatic, white as shells; and whiter yet are the walls of the roofless East. The Norwich painters – masters of the great School of English landscape – knew the value of walls. Crome, Cotman, Wilson set them in the east of their evening landscapes, their dusty roads, and upraised them opposite to the light, like clouds.

A wall is the safeguard of simplicity. It lays a long level line among the indefinite chances of the landscape. But never more majestic than in face of the wild sea, the wall, steadying its slanting foot upon the rock, builds in the serried ilex-wood and builds out the wave. The sea-wall is the wall at its best. And fine as it is on the strong coast, it is beautiful on the weak littoral and the imperilled levels of a northern beach.

That sea-wall is low and long; sea-pinks grow on

the salt grass that passes away into shingle at its foot. It is at close quarters with the tempestuous sea, when, from the low coast with its low horizon, the sky-line of sea is jagged. Never from any height does the ocean-horizon show thus broken and battered at its very verge, but from the flat coast and the narrow world you can see the wave as far as you can see the water; and the stormy light of a clear horizon is seen to be mobile and shifting with the buoyant hillocks and their restless line. The Dutch dyke has not that English aspect of a lowly parapet against a tide; it springs with a look of haste and of height; and when you first run upstairs from the encumbered Dutch fields to look at the sea, you are apt, because of old rivalries, to make comparisons with England. Even the Englishman of to-day is apt to share something of the old national perversity that was minded to cast derision upon the Dutch in their encounters with the tides.

It was against a seaport fortress,[1] profoundly walled, that some remembered winter storms lately turned their great artillery. It was a time of resounding nights; the sky was so clamorous and so close, up in the towers of the stronghold, that I seemed to be indeed admitted to the perturbed counsels of the winds. The gale came with an indescribable

[1] Dover Castle.

haste, hooting as it flew; it seemed to break itself upon the heights, yet passed unbroken out to sea; in the voice of the sea there were pauses, but none in that of the urgent gale with its hoo-hoo-hoo all night, that clamoured down the calling of the waves. This storm tossed the wave and the stones of the sea-wall up together. The next day it left the waters white with the thrilling whiteness of foam in sunshine. It was only the Channel; and in such narrow waters you do not see the distances, the wide levels of fleeting and floating foam, that lie light between long wave and long wave on a Mediterranean coast, regions of delicate and transitory brightness so far out that all the waves, near and far, seemed to be breaking at the same moment, one beyond the other, and league beyond league, into foam. But the Channel has its own strong, short curl that catches the rushing shingle up with the freshest of all noises and runs up with sudden curves, white upon the white sea-wall, under the random shadow of sea-gulls and the light of a shining cloud.

*

To mount a hill is to lift with you something lighter and brighter than yourself or than any meaner burden. You lift the world, you raise the horizon; you give a signal for the distance to stand up. It is like the scene in the Vatican when a Cardinal, with his dramatic Italian hands, bids the kneeling groups to arise. He does more than bid them. He lifts them, he gathers them up, far and near, with the upward gesture of both arms; he takes them to their feet with the compulsion of his expressive force. Or it is as when a conductor takes his players to successive heights of music. You summon the sea, you bring the mountains, the distances unfold unlooked-for wings and take an even flight. You are but a man lifting his weight upon the upward road, but as you climb the circle of the world goes up to face you.

Not here or there, but with a definite continuity, the unseen unfolds. This distant hill outsoars that less distant, but all are on the wing, and the plain raises its verge. All things follow and wait upon your eyes. You lift these up, not by the raising of your eyelids, but by the pilgrimage of your body. 'Lift thine eyes to the mountains.' It is then that other mountains lift themselves to your human eyes.

It is the law whereby the eye and the horizon answer one another that makes the way up a hill so full of universal movement. All the landscape is on pilgrimage. The town gathers itself closer, and its inner harbours literally come to light; the headlands repeat themselves; little cups within the treeless hills open and show their farms. In the sea are many regions. A breeze is at play for a mile or two, and the surface is turned. There are roads and curves in the blue and in the white. Not a step of your journey up the height that has not its replies in the steady motion of land and sea. Things rise together like a flock of many-feathered birds.

But it is the horizon, more than all else, you have come in search of. That is your chief companion on your way. It is to uplift the horizon to the equality of your sight that you go high. You give it a distance worthy of the skies. There is no distance, except the distance in the sky, to be seen from the level earth; but from the height is to be seen the distance of this world. The line is sent back into the remoteness of light, the verge is removed beyond verge, into a distance that is enormous and minute.

So delicate and so slender is the distant horizon that nothing less near than Queen Mab and her chariot can equal its fineness. Here on the edges of the eyelids, or there on the edges of the world – we

know no other place for things so exquisitely made, so thin, so small and tender. The touches of her passing, as close as dreams, or the utmost vanishing of the forest or the ocean in the white light between the earth and the air; nothing else is quite so intimate and fine. The extremities of a mountain view have just such tiny touches as the closeness of closed eyes shuts in.

On the horizon is the sweetest light. Elsewhere colour mars the simplicity of light; but there colour is effaced, not as men efface it, by a blur or darkness, but by mere light. The bluest sky disappears on that shining edge; there is not substance enough for colour. The rim of the hill, of the woodland, of the meadow-land, of the sea – let it only be far enough – has the same absorption of colour; and even the dark things drawn upon the bright edges of the sky are lucid, the light is among them, and they are mingled with it. The horizon has its own way of making bright the pencilled figures of forests, which are black but luminous.

On the horizon, moreover, closes the long perspective of the sky. There you perceive that an ordinary sky of clouds – not a thunder sky – is not a wall but the underside of a floor. You see the clouds that repeat each other grow smaller by distance; and you find a new unity in the sky and earth

that gather alike the great lines of their designs to the same distant close. There is no longer an alien sky, tossed up in unintelligible heights above a world that is subject to intelligible perspective.

Of all the things that London has foregone, the most to be regretted is the horizon. Not the bark of the trees in its right colour; not the spirit of the growing grass, which has in some way escaped from the parks; not the smell of the earth unmingled with the odour of soot; but rather the mere horizon. No doubt the sun makes a beautiful thing of the London smoke at times, and in some places of the sky; but not there, not where the soft sharp distance ought to shine. To be dull there is to put all relations and comparisons in the wrong, and to make the sky lawless.

A horizon dark with storm is another thing. The weather darkens the line and defines it, or mingles it with the raining cloud; or softly dims it, or blackens it against a gleam of narrow sunshine in the sky. The stormy horizon will take wing, and the sunny. Go high enough, and you can raise the light from beyond the shower, and the shadow from behind the ray. Only the shapeless and lifeless smoke disobeys and defeats the summer of the eyes.

Up at the top of the seaward hill your first thought is one of some compassion for sailors, inasmuch as

they see but little of their sea. A child on a mere Channel cliff looks upon spaces and sizes that they cannot see in the Pacific, on the ocean side of the world. Never in the solitude of the blue water, never between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, never between the Islands and the West, has the seaman seen anything but a little circle of sea. The Ancient Mariner, when he was alone, did but drift through a thousand narrow solitudes. The sailor has nothing but his mast, indeed. And but for his mast he would be isolated in as small a world as that of a traveller through the plains.

Round the plains the horizon lies with folded wings. It keeps them so perpetually for man, and opens them only for the bird, replying to flight with flight. A close circlet of waves is the sailor's famous offing. His offing hardly deserves the name of horizon. To hear him you might think something of his offing, but you do not so when you sit down in the centre of it.

As the upspringing of all things at your going up the heights, so steady, so swift, is the subsidence at your descent. The further sea lies away, hill folds down behind hill. The whole upstanding world, with its looks serene and alert, its distant replies, its signals of many miles, its signs and communications of light, gathers down and pauses. This flock of

birds which is the mobile landscape wheels and goes to earth. The Cardinal weighs down the audience with his downward hands. Farewell to the most delicate horizon.

*

WHILE the gardens are timed to have their August in order, and the ashes of their July blossoming swept to the winds out of the way of the late roses, the fiery nasturtiums, and the rest of the punctual contemporary flowers disconnected from the daffodil of last March and from the dahlia that will be unwelcome a month hence; while all gardens are thus professed shows, with their date foremost, places of perpetual publication, and the journalism of the country, there is a random flowering, unwatched, unbounded, small, broadcast, that makes these reaches of the Upper Thames to bloom softly between the heavy-fringed banks, with a visible summer of the face of the waters. Nay, I think that some gardens take a strange pleasure in being beforehand with the season, and in publishing news of autumn betimes, so as to take the world by surprise in the mornings; and while a mere man would have the days to linger, and wishes a long life to everything, and likes old news there, a gardener is not content unless he can have his tedious novelties something more than ready.

Due but patient, and no more in haste than Orion, who is to rise first, uneffaced by the break of day, on the vision of a late watcher on some night of this season soon, the wild-flowers of the waters are

taking their share of the upper world, fresh from their shades. Few, indeed, are the water-plants that do not come up once a year to breathe by flowers under blue sky. Something lusty and green, squat and full, that grows low, much like a sort of water-cabbage, seems to be the only plant to remain in the massive water below, and, if it flower at all, it flowers deep within the floods. But all the rest make a season's growth of the long stalk, slanting down-stream until it shall come to the sun, and put out one brief blossom. Every one knows the water-lily, the large white chalice – a form for fine metal-work – with its centre of a great colour that is not fiery nor golden, but only the pure yellow of flowers at yellow's richest and fullest; and every one knows its leaf, which is the flattest thing under that sky to which it is so absolutely open. On the flat of the world, on the level of the seas, flatter than the calm water which ripples to the oar, is this green leaf of the heavens. Familiar, moreover, is the little yellow lily, round and as yellow as a celandine, and quite unlike in colour to the soft and splendid centre of the large-pointed and argent flower.

But the river is blossoming at the summits of many eastward-stretching stems besides those of white and yellow lilies. It flowers, indeed, with a greater effect of life at the top of a stem that bears

a little cone of small white river-roses, whiter and brighter than the blackberry-flower, but otherwise like it, although it grows from a rich water-stem and not from thorns. The lilies flower as soon as they reach the winds and the beams of the world, and they rest blooming on the waters, cheek to cheek, after their long growth; but these little flowers have a spring and strength that carry them up where they can see the fields, erect, free of the water, bathed in air, with a stiff vitality. They break off short if you gather them, like hyacinths. Low in a Canadian canoe should your seat be, so that you may have the frosty cold green rushes high against the sky, and the soft winter-colour of the water carrying its little round roses in the sun, with their shadows upon the mid-stream leaves. It is also the flowering-month of the reeds that grow in slender and shadowy islands of their own.

On the margins the sedges are in flower, showing somewhat like maize in the early year when the tassels are thin in the little patches of cultivated lands. All the margins are thronged with this tall growth that is at once wild and rich, full-fed with the floods that never ebb. They stand between land and water, a company that asks for no more than standing room when the summer of the Thames goes by. As for the dry bank itself, it is never tired of a

small pink flower that grows in multitudes, sprinkled on green bushes. A hundred miles and more of the little, open, pastured bank that carries the tow-path carry also this little but innumerable flower, mixed with the long purples that wear the colour dear to young autumn.

Peace is the proper effect of summer, and the poplar does not break that calm by his tender wakefulness. The willow gives tidings of a breeze, the poplar does but mark that the stillness is alive. His excess of mobility makes him a gentle friend. He has a lofty place whereupon to watch our day, with signals of lights that tremble but never pass. The poplar is akin to the reflections in these living waters. Anon this Thames will be down at Reading, and soon, under the steep woods at Wargrave, and through Henley Bridge, and all at liberty, open and tender, with distances and harvest-fields silver-coloured and gold by turns, fringed with poppies, and long pastures rising and falling with the hills, coloured with the soft brown of the drought. Marlow, and fresh shadows, and Cliveden Woods are yet to come, but the passage by Medmenham in the open sun is the summer of the river. There, moreover, it turns so as to make a wide sky sweep about the oarsman's head, to give him now the translucent shadows of all things, and the sun beyond, and now

the plain light and colour that are opposite to the sun.

And all the while the thrilling reflections lie close about the long stone amphitheatre of the weir, close under the white cattle on the pastures, close under the white lilies on the water, far and deep under the white pigeons that cross and recross in pairs. Some complication must have taken place in the affairs of the white butterflies, for to-day they fly in fours. For of all that is white the river makes a water-vision better than that of green trees and better than the doubling of cool hollows, and hiding-places under hawthorn and alder. A rare white sail, white bird, white heifer, the white crescent moon that sets too soon – all this is the best and the gayest that the fleeting water seems to hold and does but perpetually forsake. As for the flowers, you can hardly tell, in the opal calm of the evening, which are the images of the flowers of the tall margin grasses and which are the very flowers of the flowering river, his own summer and success, the warm summit of the cold year of waters.

Evening rules assuredly not by shadow, but by the effacing of shadows. It plucks all the dazzling darkness from this landscape of August. Out of the foliage of the trees the distinct deep colours are gone, and the tree stands up opposite to the west, looking

unearthly. Nay, the dim brightness makes of the whole world a moon; and the eastern sky behind the tree is a sky for moons. The distances draw near unawares, and it is but a fold of west-lighted colour between this bank and yonder hill. And soon in the east stands the gentle and lighted cloud that doubles its wild-rose upon the river, and lays its lofty image in beneath the lilies, between the grey reeds, under the blue bloom of water – erect, profound, having sight of the sun of an ended day, and of a new night in the east.

*

The figure and the shadow have a companion, a third, a visiting creature who leaps from the mirror to the stream, is scattered and shattered by a ripple, turned to the most inventive burlesque by the minute distortions of a Neapolitan looking-glass, and restored to decorous precision and robbed of all its separate character and spirit by the perfect plate-glass of London.

It has not been said, apparently, that even the man who sold his shadow forfeited his reflection. And the reflection would be a far more dangerous thing to have astray and at large, more compromising. For if a reflection has and obeys any laws at all, they are not easy to find. Artists will tell you how you may do almost anything else by rule, but a reflection must be done from sight. It will insist upon having its painter out of doors, and upon putting him to the touch. A boat's wake on a smooth water will be so played with by its reflection as to disappoint conjecture and to delight the eye, which is a summary way of teaching the painter simplicity and vigilance. Its design is baffling at once and inevitable, and it does not show you why. The reflection is a flash, but its production is intricate. It cares not to be understood, but is quick to be seen. A child who has

'done' a sum right, and holds the total, is not more innocent of the reasons of the way he and the figures have gone together than a landscape painter, who has captured a reflection, is ignorant of the reasons of that manifestation. The broken and sprinkled image of an oar, lasting for a moment, is as difficult a sign as the constellation designed and composed by intricate laws of stellar perspective out of alien stars. It is the prettiest trick of reflection, this fracture and dismemberment, to be so smoothly repaired when the wave is still. A shred of the image of a flying wing of a sail is carried far upon another wing – the wing of the ripple, flight to flight. The water distributes it, mingles it, turn by turn, with shreds and patches, curves and ribbons, of the reflected sky; tosses and catches it to the utmost. The image, so interrupted, goes far, and all the interruptions are reflections of the sky.

We have not so many distinctions and definitions in our language that we can well be careless of those we have. Yet Wordsworth did something to confuse a very simple matter, with his 'swan and shadow.' There are waters, indeed, upon which the swan casts a shadow, and a shadow full of the charm of slow rivers in fertile soil – rivers that carry the soil in their fruitful waters; but that shadow does not show the swan as floating double. Not such softly troubled

waters were those of St. Mary's Lake. I think Wordsworth's swan was not shadowed, but reflected. And shadow and reflection are much unlike. The one plays no pranks, or plays them with a daily regularity, drawing the caricature that amused Cowper – drawing it so unfailingly at morning and evening whenever the sun is out, that it is no small wonder it should amuse any man of Cowper's age and experience, at least to that degree. The shadow is faithful in movement, and at tether it is steady enough to make a sundial; whereas the reflection, when it is Nature's own doing and not the upholsterer's, is subject and sensitive, tremulous and fugitive, shy and mobile on water.

Nevertheless, Wordsworth must be forgiven his 'shadow,' for he has made amends to the reflection by the best line that ever described one –

'It trembled, but it never passed away.'

This was in long, still weather. But let a wind come by, and the image is dispersable. No flock of wild birds is wilder, though this flock hovers within recall, and when the alarm is past closes and folds into its place again. A volley of broadcast images flies deep and wide, and is gathered back to so much calm that the little town covering the island of the

Lake of Orta has the chance-growing grass on its high church belfry mirrored below.

Lovely as are the village, the high field in flower, the forest reflected in Como, in Avon, and the Thames, all these waters – long rivers and broad seas – reflect nothing more wonderfully than a sail, except only the sun itself. A white sail at sea is more full of sun than any wind could fill it. The wind does but curve it to the utmost of its form, but the sun transforms it, so that it goes on the water a shining light. And that light the soft wave softly gives back. It gives back a greater light – the cloud's. When there is bright cloud-shine after a storm, or towards evening of a varied, electric day, the calm sea, seen from a height of coast, is a vision of the sky. Or see the waters under heavens that are blue to the east and golden to the west, and every separate ripple has also its eastern colour and its western. Or on a common grey day, a Channel day, there is something generous and great in the universal grasp that the mobile waters have taken of the light. It is shattered to bits, it is flung wide, it is intricate with fine shadows.

The earth, finally, and her innumerable waters, and man and his innumerable windows, have for their heart of reflection the image of the sun himself. While that image burns within every stream, within

every sea, within every lake, within every pool and pond of this world, the earth seems to multiply the very centre of life. She goes carrying suns. It is dazzling to think of that cargo, that treasury, those guests and sojourners, those strangers within her gates, who are but one and yet are so renewed. Of all the mental visions of the earth this is the most brilliant. Suns lurk throughout her daylight; suns in her deep places, separate, single, and fervent. All the coolness of the summer contains these suns; they are the heart in the breast of waters. They lie in the ice of the north, round and still in the equatorial ocean, and broken into sparkles and spray by quicker seas. They are caught in the fjords. The tides swing them up the coast and out again.

The towns, moreover, light themselves with suns. A thousand replies to the sunset shine in the windows of the streets. Into a room looking to the west, the sunrise comes from windows across a road – a second-hand sunshine, but sweet enough to soften all the light – so hard from the unsunned quarter of a London sky – and bright enough to cast tender shadows: it is a charming secondary sunshine with a look somewhat as though it shone through water, through shallow waves on a beach. The room has spirit from the moment those visiting rays gain ingress; and they do but come from windows that see

the east. This is the best use that glass fulfils; and many an ugly London guillotine sash, filled with cheap glass, and divided by dark bars, has, by reflection, an ardent centre of sun. The mere windows of towns reflect the authentic sun, the mirrors carry his fire, dimmed but not altered.

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ANOTHER good reason for leaving blank, unvexed, and unencumbered with paper patterns the ceiling and walls of a simple house is that the plain surface may be visited by the unique designs of shadows. The opportunity is so fine a thing that it ought oftener to be offered to the light and to yonder handful of long sedges and rushes in a vase. Their slender grey design of shadows upon your white walls is better than a tedious, trivial, or anxious repetition of diaper or flower in colours.

The shadow has all intricacies of perspective simply translated into line and intersecting curve, and pictorially presented to the eyes, not to the mind. The shadow knows nothing except its flat designs. It is single; it draws a decoration that was never seen before, and will never be seen again, and that, untouched, varies with the journey of the sun, shifts the inter-relation of a score of delicate lines at the mere passing of time, though all the room be motionless. There is, after all, a dreadful fixity in all other drawings. Why will art insist upon its importunate immortality? Wiser is the drama, and wiser the dance, that do not pause upon an attitude. But these walk with passion or pleasure, while the shadow walks with the earth. It alters as the hours

wheel. Moreover, while the habit of your sunward thoughts is still flowing southward, after the winter and the spring, it surprises you in the sudden gleam of a north-westering sun. It decks a new wall; it is shed by a late sunset through a window unvisited for a year past; it betrays the flitting of the sun into unwonted skies – a sun that takes the mid-summer world in the rear, and is about to alight on an unused horizon. So does the grey drawing, with which you have allowed the sun and your pot of rushes to adorn your room, play the stealthy game of the year.

But the luxury, the extravagance of shadows, is for lamplight. With the tender designs of lamplight shadows you can make your plain room ready for a gala night. It is a festival of leaves and lines, and you can let your fancy go wild, as the London householder's does in the ordering of upholsteries of a more solid kind and paintings out of the exhibitions. You need not stint yourself of shadows, for an occasion. These, too, the lamps cast upon your ceiling, which the sun shadows leave unvisited. And it is the best field for this manner of decoration, inasmuch as, however plain your surfaces may be, the ceiling is generally still the plainest. These two lamps make of one palm-branch a symmetrical counterchange of shadows, and here two palm-branches close with one another in shadow, their arches flowing together, and

their paler greys darkening. It is hard to believe that there is an enormous majority of people who prefer a 'repeating pattern.'

In fact, it is difficult to persuade a world so persistently busy in the work of spoiling the simplicity of surfaces that shadows are in any sense a sufficient decoration. Nay, it does not see them. It will speak of a blank wall, and apparently will see it as a blank, even when the warm white is but the ground of a wavering, various, and sensitive 'impression' of shades. We are often told that the artist should learn to leave out; but it would seem that it is the absolutely unpictorial man who habitually leaves out, who is unaware of things that would be conspicuous to a simple eye, and who has a trick of seeing local colour, for instance, without its thousand accidents of air, of climate, and of light. Nevertheless, one must grant to him that a grey day robs of their decoration the walls that should be sprinkled with day-shadows. But why should not a plaque or a picture be kept for hanging on shadowless days? To dress a room once for all, and to give it no more heed, is to neglect the units of the days.

But indoor shadows are only messages from that world of shadows which is the landscape of mid-May. Facing a May sun you see little except an infinite number of shadows. Atoms of shadow – be

the day bright enough – compose the very air through which you see the light. The trees show you a shadow for every leaf, and the poplars are sprinkled upon the shining sky with little shadows that look translucent. The liveliness of every shadow is that some light is reflected into it; shade and shine have been entangled as though by some wild wind through their million molecules. Only if you turn your back on the sun are all the innumerable shadows eclipsed and effaced. Turn southward again and they come to life, and are themselves the life, the activity, and the transparence of the day.

To eyes tired and retired all day within lowered blinds, the light looks still and changeless. So many squares of sunshine abide for so many hours, and when the sun has circled away they pass and are extinguished. He who lies alone there is less touched by the long sunshine than by the haste and passage of a shadow. That sign of the sun visits him more brilliantly than does the sunlight. Although there may be no tree to stand between his window and the south, and although no noonday wind may blow a branch of roses across the blind, shadows and their life will be carried across by a bird. To the sick man a cloud-shadow is nothing but an eclipse; he cannot see its shape, its colour, its approach, or its flight. It does but darken his window as it darkens the day,

and is gone again; he does not see it pluck and snatch the sunshine, and for him it has no edge. But the flying bird shows him wings. What flash of light could be more bright for him than such a flash of darkness? It is the pulse of life, where all change had seemed to be charmed. If he had seen the bird itself he would have seen less – the bird's shadow was a message from the sun. There are two separated flights for the fancy to follow, the flight of the bird in the air, and the flight of its shadow on earth. This goes across the window blind, across the wood, where it is astray for a while in the shades; it dips into the valley, growing vaguer and larger, runs, quicker than the wind, uphill, smaller and darker on the soft and dry grass, and rushes to meet its bird when the bird swoops to a branch and clings.

In the great bird country of the north-eastern coasts of England, about Holy Island and the basaltic rocks, the shadows of the high birds are the movement and the beating heart of the solitude. Where there are no woods to dip and ripple and make a shade, the sun suffers the brilliant eclipse of flocks of pearl-white sea birds, or of the solitary creature driving on the wind. Theirs is always a surprise of flight. The clouds go one way, but the birds go all ways: in from the sea or out, across the sands, inland to high northern fields, where the crops are late by a

month. They fly so high that though they have the shadow of the sun under their wings, they have the light of the earth there also. The waves and the coast shine up to them, and they fly between lights. Black flocks and white they gather their delicate shadows up, 'swift as dreams,' at the end of their flight into the clefts, platforms, and ledges of harbourless rocks facing the North Sea. They subside by degrees, with lessening and shortening volleys of wings and cries until there comes the general shadow of night.

All shadows cease at that approach. It is the gentlest of all shades, and all others close with it. The flutters of those pulses rest. And the only visible shadowless flight is the flight of bats. The evening is the shadow of another flight. All the birds have traced wild and innumerable paths across the mid-May earth; their shadows have fled all day faster than her streams, and have overtaken all the movement of her wingless creatures. But now it is the flight of the very earth that hides the sun.

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Every wind is, or ought to be, a poet; but one is classic, and converts everything in his day to unity; another is a modern man, whose words clothe his thoughts, as the modern critics used to say prettily in the eighteen-sixties, and therefore are separable. This wind, again, has a style, and that wind a mere manner. Nay, there are breezes from the east-south-east, for example, that have hardly even a manner. You can hardly name them unless you look at the weather-vane. So they do not convince you by voice or colour or breath; you place their origin and assign them a history according as the hesitating arrow points on the top of yonder ill-designed London spire. The most certain and most conquering of all is the west wind. You do not look to the weather-vane to decide what shall be the style of your greeting to his morning. There is no arbitrary rule of courtesy between you and him, and you need no arrow to point to his distinctions, and to indicate to you the right manner of treating such a visitant.

He prepares the dawn. While it is still dark the air is warned of his presence, and before the window was opened he was already in the room. His sun – for the sun is his – rises in a west-wind mood, with a bloom on the blue, the grey, or the gold. When the

west wind is cold, the cold is his own cold – round, blunt, full, and gradual in its very strength. It is a fresh cold, that comes with an approach, and does not challenge you in the manner of an unauthorized stranger, but instantly gets your leave, and even a welcome to your house of life. He follows your breath in at your throat, and your eyes are open to let him in, even when he is cold. Your blood cools, but does not hide from him. He has a splendid way with his sky. In his flight, which is that, not of a bird, but of a flock of birds, he flies high and low at once: high with his higher clouds, that keep long in the sight of man, seeming to move slowly, and low with the coloured clouds that breast the hills and are near to the tree-tops. These the west wind tosses up from his soft horizon, round and successive. They are tinted somewhat like ripe clover-fields, or like hay-fields just before the cutting, when all the grass is in flower, and they are, oftener than all other clouds, in shadow. These low-lying flocks are swift and brief; the west wind casts them before him, from the western verge to the eastern.

Corot has painted so many west winds that one might question whether he ever painted, in his later manner at least, any other winds. His skies are thus in the act of flight, with lower clouds outrunning the higher, the further vapours moving like a fleet out at

sea, and the nearer like dolphins. In his 'Classical Landscape, Italy,' the master has, indeed, for once, a sky that seems at anchor, or at least that moves with 'no pace perceived.' The vibrating wings are folded, and Corot's west wind, that flew through so many springs, summers, and Septembers for him (he was seldom a painter of very late autumn), that was mingled with so many aspen-leaves, that strewed his forests with wood for the gatherer, and blew the broken lights into the glades, is charmed into stillness, and the sky into another kind of immortality. Nor are the trees in this antique landscape the trees so long intimate with Corot's west wind, so often entangled with his uncertain twilights. They are as quiet as the cloud, and such as the long and wild breezes of Romance have never shaken or enlaced.

Upon most of our shores this west wind is the sea wind. But elsewhere there are sea winds that are not from the west. They, too, none the less, are conquerors. They, too, are always strong, compelling winds that take possession of the light, the shadow, the sun, moon, and stars, and constrain them all alike to feel the sea. Not a field, not a hillside, on a sea-wind day, but shines with some soft sea-lights. The moon's little boat tosses on a sea-wind night. On the coasts of North Italy the sea wind has the Mediterranean at its back, but Africa behind the Mediter-

ranean; and the people find that even this edited message from the desert takes their strength away. 'It is a sea wind, and I can carry thee no longer' is the final couplet of the song of children on the Gulf of Genoa when two little urchins join hands to carry a third to the singing of a nasal tune.

But even this wind with such a double history is a fine artist. He gathers the ilex woods together and throngs them close, as a sheep-dog gathers the sheep. They crowd for shelter, and a great wall, leaning inland also, with its strong base to the sea, receives them. It is blank and sunny, and the trees within are sunny and dark, serried, and their tops swept and flattened by months of sea storms. On the further side there are gardens – gardens that have in their midst those quietest things in all the world and most windless, box-hedges and ponds. The gardens take shelter behind the scared and hurried ilex woods, and the sea wind spares them and breaks upon the mountain. But the garden also is his, and his wild warm days have filled it with orange-trees and roses, and have given all the abundant charm to its gay neglect, to its grass-grown terraces, and to all its forsaken and forgotten trimness and order. Nothing of the nature in this seaward Italy would be so beautiful without the touch of man and of the sea gales.

When the west wind brings his rain he brings it

with the majestic onset announced by his breath. And when the light follows, it comes from his own doorway in the west. His are the opened evenings after a day shut down with cloud. He fills the air with innumerable particles of moisture that scatter and bestow the sun. There are no other days like his, of so universal a harmony, so generous.

The north wind has his own landscape, too; but the east wind never. The aspect which he gives to the day is not all his own. The sunshine is sweet in spite of him. The clouds go under his whip, but they have kinder greys than should be the colours of his cold. Not on an east-wind day are these races in heaven, for the clouds are all far off. His rain is angry, and it flies against the sunset. The world is not one in his reign, but rather there is a perpetual revolt or difference. The lights and shadows were not all his. The waxing and waning hours are disaffected. He has not a great style, and does not convince the day.

Yet all the four winds are heroic, and not the less heroic because, on their way through town, they are betrayed for a moment into taking part in any paltriness that may be there. On their way from the Steppes to the Atlantic they play havoc with the nerves of very insignificant people. A part, as it were, of every gale that starts in the far north-east

finds its goal in the breath of a reluctant citizen. You will meet a wind, worthy of better things, under a South Kensington portico, and very nimble and eager there. A gale, fresh and soft from the waves, keeps some long tryst with you at the head of Baker Street. A wind of the world flies the flag of a shop for cheap jackets in the Edgware Road. But these are only accidents of the way – the winds go free again.

As for us, we droop or flourish with the winds in such great alterations and waves of health or languor as no physician has yet quite measured. To change the air seems a futile prescription while the air changes so. What is the London climate? In truth the climates of the corners of the world rush upon these streets in the temper of the winds. The cold or heat matters little – that is local enough. But the anger and sweetness of the heat and cold come from places far apart, and rule our blood with impulses obscure with distance. In a fragile child close the influences of continent and sea.

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More has been said about London smoke in London than about London smoke in the country; and, in fact, the eyes of England have grown so used to that sorry smirching of their lower heavens which is called mist or haze that they have forgotten to look for what the edge of earth has to show of lucid and small under stooping skies. But it should strengthen the hands of those who would mend these poor local heavens to know how far the smoke of a town wanders afield and how nearly it meets the smoke of its next great neighbour. If rural solitude could make clear skies, England should have the clearest in Europe; but lonely meadow-lands, bearing the grass and flowers of Chaucer's day, closed with the hedge-rows that our fathers decreed, who knows when? and hill-sides that breathe by their wild-thyme as remote as mountains, secluded streams, places covertly or openly secret, have yet the town in their heavens. It is, of course, a question of winds. There may be some degree of the compass, some single nook of the skies, from which if the wind blows, it comes clean. No country place, perhaps, is so beset with distant towns that there is not a pure passage between them wherethrough a rare fortuitous wind walks with an unblemished foot.

It walks deftly through narrow gates of its own, and brings a day of days. The dawn comes purely upon that one certain path, the brilliant and immaculate road; and a lustrous noon follows the dawn; the westering sun has an illumination, in which the hills, golden with drought, are delicate, the long shadows mystically blue. All things – and not only the air – have a translucent look. Throbbing to the last with very flame, and pure, the sun goes down, and immediately the steady moon arises in the other heaven. In a fortnight of daily splendid sun this fine August there have been but three days thus clear, thus dark, thus bright, and transfigured through all their arch of hours. For eleven days the less fortunate winds have defiled an unclouded sun. Yet I have heard the three praised only among the others. All alike have been called glorious. Few were there to distinguish the delicate stranger, the strong visitant – the single and fortunate wind. His strength was proved by the magnificent and sudden multiplication of sunshine. His noon was purple as in Shelley's Euganean hills, the hollows of his trees were like Henry Vaughan's vision of Deity, 'a deep but dazzling darkness.' The woods met his sun with a front of fire, his extreme east was fresh at nightfall as it had been at the breaking of his memorable day. And this was but the normal day, the day of summer as it

was before factory fires were kindled, the day of the one certain wind that reaches this certain place by the road of natural skies.

In reply to any hint of smoke on a fine day (but it is better not to speak of it), you may be told to look up at the blue sky and say whether there is any sign of towns there. Obviously, it is less perceptible in the zenith, but the multiplied layers of the lower levels of sky reveal it. You must needs be convinced that you are sitting amid an attenuated, artificial 'haze' when the horizon round the whole circle is not only thickened but slightly embrowned. It is a grey-brown colour, not only a darkening but a smirching, and with it the well-known weight as though the soot were slowly, slowly dropping, sinking, and settling upon a population in unwashable clothing. But smoke is not always – though it is often, and often on a 'glorious' day – present all round your world. It may be, in still weather, that it is only your south that is begrimed, or only your lowering sun that is dimmed in setting and despoiled of his after-glow, by a lurid and faded rose.

Or it may be only the northern sky that has lost that fresh chastity of air, that look of spiritual summer, which is in the north of Nature's authentic August. Only the north; but I know not in what quarter of the heavens to look for finer, more un-

earthly, or more remote air than that of the summer north towards evening. Three tall poplars stand against the sunset, and this beauty of black and gold is one of Nature's lesser successes; or the long habit of eyes drawn thereto, as the eyes of those who sit in a winter room are drawn to the fire, has nearly made it too familiar. Opposite to the sunset is the violet east, also known by heart. But against the north are seven other poplars and the dome of a light and scattered elm; and the sky beyond these has the gentlest and most distant blue – but it can hardly bear the name of a colour – in the whole round. The after-sunset sky of the west looks hardly more distant than the verge of the earth, but the northern sky at that hour has no such place; it is thin air, and austere. Ill befall the wind that wrongs that soft, cool, sweet, and infinite north. And obviously it is the chief work of distant smoke to destroy distance. A sky touched with smoke is no further, and looks no further, than the lifeless particles can rise.

Ours is a country of all winds, although some there are amongst them that prevail, and for this cause there is no place secure. But by the good fortune of their two winds, and no more, many continental towns are protected after the manner, for example, of Genoa. Of late years the western suburb or continuation of this sea-city has become black with

factories. Bad coal, and an absolute indifference to its effects upon the air, combine to load that sunny climate with a burden blacker and thicker than that wherewith the English mists are adulterated. But there are only two dominant winds upon the Ligurian coast – the mountain-wind and the sea-wind. Therefore, the deep smoke engendered in that single place is blown straight north inland, or straight south to the sea. Little of it wanders. The shining sapphire of the noon sky, the burning blue of the waters, the lustre of the horizon, the country dust deep on the hill-side roads, the soft rose and yellow of the old coloured houses, the red oleander, the grey-greens of the cultivated lands, are all as pure as though this industrial suburb – hidden, too, beyond a cape of a coast that is a long series of profiles of majestic mountain – had no visible, at least, no lateral influence. What becomes of the smoke of Sampierdarena it might be hard to say; perhaps the light and mobile air clears itself like running water, and outsoars its load so easily that the soot is quickly shed; however this may be, the coast of two winds sees little or nothing of it. A passing steamer leaves – for a little while – more trace.

But we, with many towns and many winds, have a maze made for the feet of chance weather; heat and cold stray there out of their ordinary ways, and the

quality of the air is subject to more subtle varieties. But it is stranger to see light itself so altered. No darkness of mere climate is anything but noble, nor does light ever look sweeter in heaven or richer on earth than when at play with clouds that give the gravity of a brief eclipse to a silver noon. But smoke, as it drifts into the country, has no forms, no shadows. Its source is a covered fire that the town holds beneath the slate roofs, in an untempered though blemished sunshine. Too well is the marred country sky of so many days explained as you draw towards London, and mark the wayside towns where the furnace hides:

'Fires that scorch and dare not shine.'

This line of Pope's youthful 'Chorus to the Tragedy of Brutus' suits well with the factory fires. He made thereby the antithesis in an eighteenth-century poem of which the reader may like derisively to remember the lines:

'Marcus with blushes owns he loves,
And Brutus tenderly reproves.'

The earlier line already quoted (and it is a good one) refers, needless to say, to a passion less estimable than this of Marcus. It shall here describe the dimmed, dulled town that is able so to quench, far

beyond the sight of its bricks and the rattle of its labour, the light of the margin of country skies.

It is a fortunate accident that has given their honest red to bricks and tiles, and the grey of stone walls is a mere transference to buildings of the colour of the rock. But there was a time when some intention of colouring cities had its place in the more deliberate mind of men. Strangely enough, the ideal of smoky London would seem to some to have been a general white. It is not easy to believe (but the facts compel us) that London intends to be a city of white aspect, and all the shallow bad black of which we see so much is really white in a state of discouragement. A great part of London is a white city at a disadvantage. It is difficult either to realize or to deny this disconcerting truth, with all its helplessness; a white city, with a white cathedral, moreover. Great districts of London, of course, never did more than look on with admiration while the rest professed its whiteness, but those inferior regions were out of the plan, and professed nothing but their own wise negations. Where an intention did exist, it was the intention of pure, glossy, painty, civic whiteness.

Towns with less smoke in their air, and with a less rainy climate have not aspired to such a thing; and the efforts of London have not suggested emulation, inasmuch, perhaps, as the world hardly understood

the improbable truth about the hopes of London. Venice was satisfied with a rose-colour subject to sun and salt. 'Venise la rouge,' as Alfred de Musset saw her, has her moods of colour, and doubtless there never was a city so coloured as to be free from innumerable scattered incidents of different and altered tints; a prevalence is generally the utmost that ought to be desired; and it is a rosy prevalence that is so perceptible in Venice. No stronger word than perceptible would suit the colour that wanders so by the waterways and is threaded by lights from the sky and the Adriatic. Venice is prevalently rosy under cloud and blue, but the prevalence is subtle enough to escape the greater number of her painters. You cannot call Canaletto's Venice a rosy city, for example.

Great part of North Italy used, long ago, the same rosy fresco for its plaster, alternating with a delicate, fresh, and sunny yellow. By a perfect instinct of the time these two warm colours, in very gentle tints and lightened by the white they covered, were mostly the tints in use, with gay whitewash in the intervals. There were no other colours so happy for cities roofed with silver-grey and set amid barren hills or somewhat pale vegetation. If the other colours were consciously rejected by the common fine artist of those lucky times, there must have been two among them in regard to which the consciousness of rejec-

tion was indeed acute – cold light blue and chocolate, let us say. Accordingly, it is to chocolate and cold light-blue that the Italian builder of later unlucky days has turned in the ingenuity of his choice.

A delicate brown is the colour of Florentine palaces, with the rich dark under the tiles of the projecting eaves, but all the villages and farms are red by their roofs. Heidelberg is red, or her castle makes her seem so. But clear grey with their stone are the cities of the flat Rhine, and the thick round apses of the noble Teutonic churches are as grey as rock, and plain, and they make the many shadows of the Gothic of Cologne look by comparison uneasy and like the tricks of a toy.

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Of the roofs of some towns no one knows much. You may be aware that, as a matter of fact, the houses are covered in with slate, but you are not obliged to see the effect. No eye but that of birds sees all the darkness and hardness of the colour; the importunate, cold reflections of the light, especially when the roofs are wet, and the few and dull other accidents that may befall them from the weather. On the other hand, a sudden height – say the high line of a railway – detects a whole district of tiles, beautifully unequal and various with time and climate, which the houses belie by their later faces. Street after street in London, for instance, has put up box façades, high in front, obviously in order to disguise the high red roofs of which it is ashamed. London is a much more ruddy, tender-toned, and pointed city than anyone would guess from the point of view of the pavement.

But roofs, avowed or unavowed, make the character and colour of towns. It is the ill luck of the south-east of England to have at hand certain dark slates of a rather blue or violet colour. They make the ugliness of many a town. And when they go with walls of yellow brick, as they do through miles and miles of suburb, and close to railway stations far

into the country, then you have a visible sign of the great ill-fortune of the modern world – the world in which chance is nearly always ugly.

Take a slated town unlucky enough to be hilly, and surrounded by hills. Seen from above, it consists of its roofs. It is a slate town, its walls might be of mosaics or frescoed; they would be out of sight. A hard town, without mystery of surface, without dimples, without any hint of the vein of gold that runs, more or less apparent at the surface, in all fine colour, and without the mossy velvet-pile that the sun makes with innumerable little shadows of the ridges of old tiles. A slate town, moreover, reaches with but an awkward gait over its rising ground. A slate street, with continuous roofs, climbing helplessly uphill, is all made up of modern ill-luck. The angles are feeble and contradictory, the lines without purpose. The design is impotent, and the execution hard as nails. Add to all this the allusion to slate pencils and to an electric distress of the nerves.

Needless to say, there are slates and slates. Genoa is grey-roofed, but not with a purple-grey. In fact, the variety between the silver Genoa seen from its mountains, and the brown Florence seen from its hills, between the dark grey of a subalpine village and the red of the plains, is one of the good fortunes of Italy. It is much the custom to associate red roofs

with the north, but the red roofs of Italian villages are exceedingly conspicuous; they are very slightly raised – the angle of the gable is of few degrees, but they project in the broad eaves that gather shadows, and the shadows are full of reflected sunshine. The roofs of Genoa are pure grey, the colour of an oyster-shell, and with much the same ridges, delicate in the light and distance. They are silver colour, with the sea shining beyond. Again, there are admirable grey roofs in the old city of Susa, and in the villages under Mont Cenis, with the thick slates propped upon one another (through the good luck of stress of climate, this time) in a fortunate design. In North Wales, too, the slates, though they have the general English thinness, are often admirable in colour, and the good luck of time has given them dips and dimples, and here and there the slender figure of grass. France shows greenish slates, of wonderful variety. The roofs of Dijon show a play of green-silver and grey-silver, and the adjective for that clear city is 'bright-roofed.'

English tiles, on the other hand, are as beautiful as any in the world. Less interesting when they are new than the Italian with their thick semi-circular waves, they are more subject to the good luck of age and weather. They become beautifully unequal, and hold soft shadows, and make little tender hollows.

The very smoke – the enemy – hardly harms them. Either they reject it and resist it, or its shallow blackness does not wholly hide the red. Certain it is that those stealthy unconfessed old tiles that are in groups enough here in the streets and in the older suburbs of London, are always beautiful, various, and, though untouched by grass, by no means out of touch with Nature. The air and the light, sun and cloud shadow, are friends with them; so are both grey and blue skies, and the mingled skies of an impetuous and uncertain summer. They have that village character of building which was lately so peculiar to London amongst all cities, and so absolutely in contradiction to its other qualities and to its habits, and which has been so outfaced, screened away, boxed up, bricked, and plastered over, and left open to nothing but the sky. The tiled roofs cluster together, behind and a little below the taller rectangles of the later taste. Let us hope that they do not roof in the heads of the poor less securely than do the more squalid slates. They look, indeed, like the better shelter, and though they are lowly enough, they are not squalid.

Not only the countries, but even the counties vary in their roofs. Kent, for example, has a peculiarly compact and smooth-tiled roof, with narrow but thick and definite eaves; it fits her farms and hop-houses like a lid, and gives to her orchard villages an

admirable sense of shelter and repair. It is not a little curious, by the way, to find that the small holdings tolerated in Kent by William the Conqueror are the long-lasting cause of the cultivation of this little district, the cause of its flowering in any present spring with acres of apple blossom, and the cause of the hives and honey that attend the fruit. Not in Kent is the country composed of the multiplication of the green grass field with a hedge-row round it that is all of England to be travelled through in many directions one knows of. Kent is in blossom; her rows of hop-poles etch themselves delicately against the tender sky; bright, white cloud flashes over bright, white trees, and there is no very great space of ground without roots.

As for thatch, it is a sign of the wild and gentle presence of flowering marshes, river-lands, and margins. Thatch is man's retort upon the separate, remote, and extra-territorial sedges. He throws away their dusky flower, and cuts them to measure for his roofing, slices them as he does his own domestic hay. Of the thatch of convention, the thatch of the tedious picturesque, you cannot have more perfect examples than in the interior of the Isle of Wight. But on the mainland of Hampshire they hollow out their thatches curiously to make an effect of eyebrows over the eyes of their cottage windows. Perhaps, on the

whole, thatched roofs are not altogether worthy of so much love from the Royal Academy and the Water-colour Society. They mark too much the differences of this world. The Tuscan cottage is tiled with the same tile as the *castello*, but the thatch is a sign of abjection; it alludes to serfdom.

Now, after all complaints of the dark hard slates, the sun comes to convince you that there is nothing that remains always out of the sphere of his own beauty. The sorry roofs are invested by his lighted air. It is a blue noon – blue air, blue smoke, blue sea, blue sky, blue town, blue hills. The slate town lies between you and the sun, and local colour is almost effaced; for the sun effaces. There is nothing but blue light – light that is hurried with the winds. Not even the sun could make those roofs look tolerable if you took the other aspect and stood between him and the slates. But now the visible air distributes a universal illusion of sunshine.

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Cold are the only living fires; for these are the little rhythmic flames that in so many thousands thread the country nights in the south. Fireflies are so true to summer that the tourist, and he who perversely chooses to winter in summer-lands, may well go through their career of travel and never once see the lighting and lapsing, lighting and lapsing, of those innumerable flights. Roses and blue skies are far less loyal to their liberal god, Summer, and more idly at the service of strange seasons. You may capture a show of flowers for a chilly winter garden, and persuade all the colours to lodge with you. But fireflies do not love travel – they baffle the collector by putting their soft lights out. For them you most rewardingly seek in the midst of the cultivated lands, where the little shining shuttles shoot in and out of vines and olives. They are most abundant in those homely lands, where narrow fields join hands in the monotonous order of a dance of little mulberry trees linked by vines.

It is small, encumbered scenery, full of unnumbered repetitions, and full also of the finest forms of leaf and classic plant, nowhere dense, nowhere impenetrable, and nowhere absorbent of the universal sun. In showers and showers the lights abound, and

the earth is struck with sunshine at every point. The traveller may call this nothing else than a grievous lack of shade, if he be the usual traveller in search of something that is elsewhere appropriate. Shade there certainly is none in this Italian garden of small growth, but only delicate shadow, which is nothing else than the writing of the light – its thin pencil for drawing the hand of the fig-tree or the vine, and the feather of maize. All the country has an inimitable unity rather because than despite of its small detail. No walls or hedges divide possession from possession or field from field; straight green grass paths give access far and near, and the whole land is interwoven all day by lights and by tendrils, all night by fireflies. They flit slowly, and do not baffle the tardy sight of man, which is so easily outrun, dazzled, eluded, set at naught, doubled upon, and abandoned by natural swift movement. Bees are quicker, and the perpetual alternate darkening and kindling of fireflies give to that shining flight in the night an effect of innumerable pauses. It is only when a firefly has come by some misfortune, and is injured and cannot fly, that it shines steadily.

In spite of the custom of poets to speak as though glow-worms were among the habitual beautiful things of a landscape as a night traveller sees it with his peering eyes, they are so rare that it is quite pos-

sible to know the English country for many years and in many places and characters, and to have seen perhaps three glow-worms all told, or perhaps none. Whereas, fireflies are in such multitudes as to be themselves the chief scenery, the foreground, and the distance of the deep night. Yet the poets have somewhat slighted them. No one, for example, who had ever really marked their intricate free flight, the beauty of movement, the length, the multiplicity, the universal presence and the difference of direction of all these little lights, would have thought of tangling them 'in a silver braid,' to make an image of the Pleiades. Fireflies never swarm, they are never tangled, they do not glitter, no silver braid would add anything to their mystery or their brightness. Imagination had nothing to do with that similitude; but even as a rather common kind of fancy, it is surely something less than simple or just. In northern skies the Pleiades are too vague and dim for fireflies, and it is a little blur that tangles them without sparkle. In the south, where the Pleiades are pricked into keener starlight, and are to be counted clearly, you may see the ill-luck of the image, on the spot.

Elsewhere Tennyson has the simpler art to say merely that 'the firefly wakens,' and with the firefly he names a palace garden, gold fins in a porphyry font, a cypress, a milk-white peacock, white and crimson

petals asleep, and the glimmering of her who comes upon the garden walk like the ghost of Pope's or of Ben Jonson's unfortunate lady. It is a splendid night-piece. In such a palace garden, only marred or endeared, as the thing may seem to various fancies, by the realities of the south, the fireflies wakened summer after summer on the Ligurian coast. The finish and prosperity wherewith you are compelled to deck the garden of Tennyson were not there. There was nothing at all like a fine steel engraving; whereas, but for genius, the suggestion of a steel engraving 'soft' in effect, hard as nails in method, would be harassing in the Tennyson picture. Genius makes his garden noble and magical; but Italy made mine.

The palace of reality was out of repair, or if not precisely that, it was assuredly not what an Englishman would consider well 'kept up.' Its great loggia of arches showed no marble, but ancient plaster painted long ago in soft reds and yellows, after the local manner. It was long since gold fins had winked in the fountain, and the fountain had long forgotten to flow; maidenhair ferns cumbered the duct, and grass had broken the grey stones of the terraces. No flowers had been set in that garden for a hundred years, but tiny roses, yellow and white, had their way high and low, and random petunias and stocks breathed in the night.

Nevertheless, it is in the vineyards rather than in the garden that the fireflies are most truly in their own place, wandering interminably in interminable plantations. They fly close under village and city walls. Where the cultivated country begins abruptly there are they, and you may see them by ones and twos astray in the street, kindling and quenching their overpowered light under the electric lamps.

Not only for the infrequent glow-worm, but for the more infrequent will-o'-the-wisp are they slighted by poets. To hear these you would think every marsh to be lighted by the *ignis fatuus*, which was so dear a tradition of our childhood. Who has had the good luck to see such a thing? Humperdinck's opera 'Hansel und Gretel' was fairly lighted up with will-o'-the-wisps; they must have bored those wandering children with their persistent menaces. But neither wood nor bog yields an *ignis fatuus* to us once in a lifetime. Nor, after all, is that dance of fire the dance of life; it is only the dance of a proverb.

The firefly has the fire of actual life, and it is a cold fire, like that of the dead moon. All the beautiful eyes of the human race, which we feign to be luminous, do but 'lodge the light.' All the energetic red of our fires is less than this fire upon the wing – the little fly that can cast a shadow and is a living creature. It does not flit beyond its countries, nor is its

season there long. A long midsummer sees its brilliant flight from beginning to end. The fruit is gathered without its company, and it does not light the vintage.

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For some cause, perhaps referable to her own mere moderation of demeanour, beauty, and array, the Venetian woman of the people has had her portrait but ill done, though with a various kind of failure, by the generations of painters. The Venetian girl was presented in a light frock and yellow handkerchief, unlaced and untidy, fringed, strung with beads and set off with a flower, having her hair done in the open air, and gossiping, with gesture of the hands and play of expression.

Meanwhile the Venetian girls, giving no sign that they are aware of the tedious convention of the studios in regard to them, are pacing the city that is so much their own, often in black. Whatever the current fiction may be, they walk in that novelty and composure, surprise and harmony together, that (in fortunate countries and cities) are real life. The dress, if not always black, is always dark, trimly enough made, but quite indistinctive, neither short nor long; the stockings are always black, the shoes neat. And the universal open-air garment of the townswoman of all ages is the black shawl with a deep silken fringe, folded with a short point above and a long point below, that wraps the figure about from neck to foot. She does not fasten it at the throat, and when it slips

off she has a way of gathering it upon one outstretched arm that is like the action of a dove stretching her wing.

Venice would be quite another Venice than that of the end of the nineteenth century if the Venetian girl should ever begin to wear a hat, but she shows no signs that she will ever be visited by such a desire. Evening is her time, for she is a girl of affairs; and where the band plays, she strolls. Groups of threes and fours of girls – how familiar is that association of light-linked figures in all towns where women are at work in shop or factory, in all villages where they take a share in labours of the field, meadow, or road! They laugh along so many highways in the dusk; and here it is a candid laugh, and there a giggle and a scream. But the Venetian girl knows no lapse of dignity. Never, early or late, nor on the Piazza, which she likes to tell you is a drawing-room, with the marble veins and edges of its pavement, nor in the darkest by-street, shall you hear these voices of leisure raised in any kind of discord, nor even so much as forced to an ill-bred pitch, or jangled by any untuning excitement, coarseness, or even gaiety or haste. Sweet bells of Venetian dialect – I mended my reading of Goldoni by listening for all their peculiar chimes, and got his *xè* precisely right. Coquettes these may be, but modest ones, who must be sought,

who show nothing to the public but an easy and a sweet frigidity, whom no Venetian would have a dream, or desire, of engaging in that kind of gallantry to which the girls of a prouder race submit on their Bank-holidays – the approach by ways of burlesque, the provocative advance, in a word the irony, which is the strange popular form of the game farther north.

Beauty is not frequent in the class that hears the band and walks under this Venetian moon. Twice or thrice a day you may see a head wearing the famous colour, the 'Titian red'; but the dark, straight hair is the rule, and there is almost the lack of height that prevails in France, but with somewhat more slenderness. The Venetian groups are not distinctly graceful, but with so much candour and composure they cannot be graceless. None of their painters seem to be aware of that peculiar reserve, nor of the look they all wear as conscious Venetians. Theirs is the incomparable city; theirs is St. Mark's, grave and fantastic; theirs the Lombard tower, plain and joyful; theirs are the two columns seaward; theirs the Gothic tracery and the Renaissance rectangle, the whole distinction of the city and the isles, and they put on their ownership visibly. There are no carriages to hustle them, no signs or shows of wealth, nothing to abash them – not that Venetian girls would be idly

or vainly disconcerted, or of so mean a mind as to defy, to emulate, to deprecate, or even closely to observe, the shows of fortune. But the rich keep out of the way, or within doors, in the sea-city; and for the class that we call middle, or perhaps lower-middle, the palaces stand in the moonlight, the waters move, the splendid piazza is spread, polished and clean, the Gothic colonnade takes the shadows, the Saracenic colours of St. Mark's doorways front the late light; for them the square of little shops glows with the electric light, for them the band plays Wagner. Nowhere else may you see thus a great city in absolute self-possession. Or let the visitor boast that at any rate the coral-shops and bead-shops live by him. But the cafés live by the Venetians, and for them are set the hundreds of chairs, to-night on the Quadri side, to-morrow night on the Florian side, according to the pitching of the orchestra.

To Venice has long been awarded the lot of the rebuked, and the nations have taken upon themselves *le beau rôle* of the rebuker. Her greatness, her fall, her corruption – how many reproaches, how many lessons, how many confessions of the general justice of events, how many eloquent regrets, have closed each recital of the history of Venetia. Who that has told how her doge crowned a kneeling emperor of the East for the double jurisdiction, who that has

rehearsed the successes of the Republic, but finds something to his hand for a warning, respectful and rhetorical, to ocean powers of a later age? No seaport too poor in history, too dull in aspect, too abject in the builded front it turns upon the wave, to moralize the tale of this city towards the east.

I know not from what vantage-ground of innocence the nations impose their indignation and pity. But it is certain that Venice is not mentioned without her sins; you meet them in romances, ancient and new, even though we may import the crime in the dishonouring person of a popular poet. She is always, to the raconteur, the reproved city. Mrs. Thrale told a queer story of Venetian customs, and George Sand made matter for another. But, in fact, the rebuked city has innocent ways that would do any other city honour. Her streets are clean – the sea-streets and the stone. And much of this disregarded honour of Venice, and good report of her holiday and summer evenings, is to be ascribed to the young Venetians, those girls of dignity.

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You cannot pass through the real nooks of the world on your own business; they lead nowhere. If you care for them you can rest there awhile; but you must go away back on your own traces. Winds and footsteps drift thither, and find no passage, and the sunshine seems to close there with more remoteness, finality, and peace. A nook is generally of man's work mingled with Nature's, and an old wall generally shuts it off as nobly as any rock. One thing is necessary for a nook – sunshine; without it the place is a mere fag-end of things, and of such London itself is full. Not all on purpose, nor all by chance, was the corner formed; it is disregarded, and its flowers have sown themselves at the wind's will. Colour and light linger late there –

'Sunny eve in some forgotten place.'

There is a nook at the back of some corner of Hereford Cathedral. No one who has dreamed of places likely to have sun-dials can ever have imagined a more brooding or more forgotten retreat of stone and flowers. Whether there is actually a sun-dial is of little moment – there are, at any rate, bright grey stones, and they have cracked and parted to give way to the growth of a bygone garden. The place is,

of course, a ruin, and a ruin is but indifferently dressed in the green, exact, and lifeless lawns with which the English gardener sometimes invests their overthrow. It is going too far, surely, to weed a ruin and to adorn it with flower-beds in repeating patterns; on the other hand, the mere grass shivers there too coldly without any flowers at all. At least, flowers are necessary for a real nook; and these, at Hereford, are the random flowers that once were set in borders. We inherit the young disorder of the lapse and ruin of a mere border of pansies, as well as the old ruin of the stones. Ours are the venerable times. The mediæval towns were sharp and new, and must have looked, within their walls, like a box of hard toys too tightly packed.

This Hereford corner is beyond and within the cloister; it has no thoroughfare for passing feet; and in the middle is the trace of some old pond or well, which makes little more than a dimple effaced in the careless grass. Nothing more definite remains to suggest the uses of the broken quadrangle. One accustomed to the regulation of monastic buildings suggested the right name of this enclosure of ruin, but I have already forgotten it. In a word, it is a place that many centuries have made, but no other century will see. Either a restorer will come this way, or the ruins will crumble too much and no

longer enclose it so exactly, or perhaps a Dean's or a Canon's lawns will approach and embrace the place, and it will become a mere garden. The centuries have given it, by their own slow paradox, a transitory charm.

It is the transitory charm, indeed, so long prepared, that is the almost human beauty of Italy. A little while ago and Venice was not so faded, and a little while hence and she will be more faded, and the sun and salt that have made this tender red by effacement of old colour will efface it more. Italy, needless to say, has many nooks for those who seek them. Great roads along which armies might pass she has, and byways and bridle-paths between her high-walled roads conscious of the outer sunshine, but she has also, in her own perfection, the blind, silent, and neglected enclosure where nothing goes by but time. Such a place, with only one entrance, is the box-hedged forgotten garden by an old villa on the Genoese coast. These box-hedges are very small, hardly a foot high, and they border gravel walks where the pebbles are mixed with Mediterranean shells, and there is more grass than stone or shell. Almond trees, plum-trees, and small cypress trees stand by the high old gate of rusty iron with its hinges set in lichened and broken stone. A prickly pear to the right used to have a mysterious power of

tormenting instantly with prickles a child who was so rash as to set a foot in its own peculiar path; the air seemed to carry them. The garden is much too old for flowers, except random ones; but the statued fountain in the middle has living water still, and living goldfish. No one else goes thither. There are the broad terraces well in sight, arranged with that majestic sense of approach proper to the Italians of the past – a double flight of stone steps to reach every terrace – one to the right and one to the left, and a cascade fountain with its maidenhair fern in the space enclosed. A great way down, this mountain garden ends in a little landing of a field with a wall – and a view! And a great way down yet again lies the sea round its pines and promontories. All this is a road from the rock to the hill, and you may go your way thereby and come back no more.

Nooks are also by the tideless sea where a rock bars one way, and nooks in the bays where only a boat can enter. But wherever they are, and under whatever sky, they are the figures of certain regions of human thought through which there is no passage. An enclosure not of imprisonment, a finality not of despair are at the end of such thoughts; there is no way beyond, there is no knowledge to reach, there is no explanation, and if a question leads thither there is no solution, and no way out but to retrace your steps in

doubt, and but one kind of peace to be had there. The roads of thoughts that are processes, passages, and journeys go by and are open. To the woods there are a thousand gates, and to the freer mountains there are none; to the shifty garden there are two; to the nook there is one only.

Sometimes the eye of a traveller recognizes a nook from a great distance, at a glance, where it lies. A little pasture that seems to soar, higher than an upland valley, is such a nook, and it is a pity to think that one may never see it again; or an English country churchyard that has no wicket; or the melancholy burial-ground of a French village, with its thin black crosses. There you may count upon solitude, and there are certainly some of the European countries in which solitude, or freedom from the voices of the passing people, is much to be desired – England, unfortunately, the chief of them all. It happened, for example, to the writer to hear a little boy, in the cheerfulness of his heart, attempt to exchange a brief passing conversation on equal terms with two or three passing workmen on a Dover hill. The child had lagged behind his nurse a little, and he took the opportunity of talking to something more masculine, and what he said was but a word of good humour. The workman of fiction would have replied with some hearty phrase having 'young master' in it.

What the workman of fact answered to the little boy can be reported only by dashes, and it ended with 'fool.' 'Gar – you – fool.' An organ grinder would have said, 'Ah, signorino!' It is necessary, in going through such a wayside incident as this, to say to yourself, simply: 'Shakspeare, Crashaw, Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth.' There is no other way, for the time, of enduring the nationality; and whenever the horrible voices one overhears make the language seem the most intolerable of all languages in sound as well as in significance, it is necessary to say that same charm over, in order to remember well that it is the most heavenly language in the world.

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PURE from the refuse and regrets that encumbered the autumn, clean of memories, the strong and delicate winter woods are brown upon many a fold of the doubled and redoubled hills of a western river. Shreds and patches of corrupt colour had hung torn about their tops, old fleeces from the green multitudes of flocks that went this way, until a December tempest, with the level trumpets of an early-Florentine 'Last Judgment,' shook them off. A fresh and warlike gale from the north turned the page of the year in a night.

Dark lands new from an autumn ploughing are not more simply or richly coloured than the unleafed forests. The green grass is coldly refreshed from the dimness to which the old summer had faded it. But the promontories and the river are edged and painted in intercepted lights rather than in colours. A slight mist carries the light, whitens the sky, divides headland from headland, and guides the pencils of the sky – pencils of few colours and large design. The banks are bare, and their cropped margins prove how rich and rapid is one year's growth of riverside reeds and flowers. One summer's work was the hedge of tall green tipped with the innumerable small pink flowers; one summer's the whole intricate margin of

slender stalks of a few kinds, but of league-long and league-long repetition, that kept the way of the winding waters. But autumn had felled it long before the tempest that was itself a winter, and flew between two years.

This, however, is no river of reeds, for the tides are among these multitudes of hills; a space of steel and silver shore shows twice a day between water and wood, and seagulls, dark against the sky and white against the woods, take long flights into the country of the snipe and the heron. But for the birds there would be little sign of life. A solitary prospect closes and recloses, as we sail, upon bays and sheltered valley wherein, if this were the Rhine, successive villages would gather their houses by a double-spired church, while the hand of the villager marked the whole range with the vegetation of harvests. And now and then a hill is nearly as steep as the hill whereon, if this were a river in the Apennines, a little town would cling, far-sighted, grasping the stone with stone, and watching the scarped approach. But in this lonely land there are no living creatures except the flocks of many kinds of birds that winter here, streaming against the bright horizon, calling from the transparent trees where their nests are thick, fluttering small in the height of the sky, and coming up from the sea and the south like lights from the

shrouded sun. Birds are a part of the various sky, and seem to lead the winds.

Only one village have we seen in many miles, and it so lurks within its dark colours against a dark hill as to be hardly seen. Much of the difference of countries and of counties is in their quarries; and all these Cornish houses and cottages are built of a gloomy stone and roofed with a dusky slate – not the unsightly blue so familiar (with yellow brick) in the rest of England, but a grey slate of better and thicker substance. This covers the sullen village without gable or eaves. No brick, no tile, no thatch is to be found. The rock that comes sharply through the pasture and shelters the sheep is made square for the little square house, and the face of the house looks always as though it had but now been wetted by a flaw of windy rain. The darkling hamlet, aloof and quite silent, makes the deepest grey among the greys of a short daylight, and here, precisely where the stones are the darkest of all stones, no whitewasher has made a house plain and pure upon a hill, nor any seawall clear from the brown nets and tackle. Here the fisherman's gear hides on the dark terrace of his rocky garden, and his dwelling in its ambush of naked stone. The great country house, albeit uncovered by the winter trees, is hooded in its colour; and the small village bears its arms on the sign of a little

sombre inn that hides on the highwayside from the traveller's eye. In high daylight the dark stone cottage is sulky within its covering dusk; and at evening or in the shadow of a hill, it is sunken in an early night.

One colour only has varied the manifold greys, bright or dark, of the journey inland between uncounted hills, and back again to where the river, doubled by a broad tributary, opens into one of many warlike harbours. Red is painted raw upon the sides of many a vessel, and red softly dyes many a sail with the dye of the sails of Venice and of the north; and red is the evening sky that has wheeled and clapped about our heads in our wheeling course, and now folds and closes on the right, over the promontory and the pines. All day long the clouds had wandered, upright, astray, uncentred, stragglers, each one, as it were, with his own perspective, standing vaguely between the zenith and the limits of the land; but the sunset commands them all, and makes one law for the inarticulate skies.

Here, then, are the battleships, beginning to swing each a soft lamp in the storms of flying daylight. We drop between them towards the harbour mouth again. Here lies the low ship that looked so terrible long ago, when, a new creature of shipbuilding, she came over the waves, unlike a ship, her deck among

the waves, walking with her turret and her gun. She is no longer terrible. Merely because we know that she is lately obsolete, she looks no more dreadful than a toy.

Forests of ancient oaks here ride charged with the salt of the ancient sea. The history of the national navy is between these seaward hills – the slow history of the past, and that of the last half-century beginning to make haste, and making more haste with every decade of elastic years. All the great seaport town begins to show in tiers and ranges of steady but uncertain lights, against which the floating lights of the ships make a delicate dance. The keenest white darts are from the lighthouse on the breakwater, beyond which is the leaping sea.

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It is no small thing – no light discovery – to find a river Andromeda and Arcturus and their bright neighbours wheeling for half a summer night on their way around a pole-star in the waters. One star or two – delicate visitants of streams – we are used to see, somewhat by a sleight of the eyes, so fine and so fleeting is that apparition. Or the southern waves may show the light – not the image – of the evening or the morning planet. But this, in a pool of the country Thames at night, is no ripple-lengthened light; it is the startling image of a whole large constellation burning in the flood.

These reflected heavens are different heavens. On a darker and more vacant field than that of the real skies, the shape of the Lyre or the Bear has an altogether new and noble solitude; and the waters play a painter's part in setting their splendid subject free. Two movements shake but do not scatter the still night: the bright flashing of constellations in the deep Weir-pool, and the dark flashes of the vague bats flying. The stars in the stream fluctuate with an alien motion. Reversed, estranged, isolated, every shape of large stars escapes and returns, escapes and returns. Fitful in the steady night, those constellations, so few, so whole, and so remote, have a sud-

denness of gleaming life. You imagine that some unexampled gale might make them seem to shine with such a movement in the veritable sky; yet nothing but deep water, seeming still in its incessant flight and rebound, could really show such altered stars. The flood lets a constellation fly, as Juliet's 'wanton' with a tethered bird, only to pluck it home again. At moments some rhythmic flux of the water seems about to leave the darkly-set, widely-spaced Bear absolutely at large, to dismiss the great stars, and refuse to imitate the skies, and all the water is obscure; then one broken star returns, then fragments of another, and a third and a fourth flit back to their noble places, brilliantly vague, wonderfully visible, mobile, and unalterable. There is nothing else at once so keen and so elusive.

The aspen poplar had been in captive flight all day, but with no such vanishings as these. The dimmer constellations of the soft night are reserved by the skies. Hardly is a secondary star seen by the large and vague eyes of the stream. They are blind to the Pleiades.

There is a little kind of star that drowns itself by hundreds in the river Thames – the many-rayed silver-white seed that makes journeys on all the winds up and down England, and across it, in the end of summer. It is a most expert traveller, turning a little

wheel a-tiptoe wherever the wind lets it rest, and speeding on those pretty points when it is not flying. The streets of London are among its many highways, for it is fragile enough to go far in all sorts of weather. But it gets disabled if a rough gust tumbles it on the water so that its finely-feathered feet are wet. On gentle breezes it is able to cross dry-shod, walking the waters.

All unlike is this pilgrim star to the tethered constellations. It is far adrift. It goes singly to all the winds. It offers thistle plants (or whatever is the flower that makes such delicate ashes) to the tops of many thousand hills. Doubtless the farmer would rather have to meet it in battalions than in these invincible units astray. But if the farmer owes it a lawful grudge, there is many a rigid riverside garden wherein it would give me great pleasure to sow the thistles of the nearest pasture.

*

'WHAT moon ever roared?' asks an able writer upon poetic words. For, in a literary paper appears an article built of appreciations of 'schismatic' words, those vanward phrases, as one might name them, whereby the poets (some poets) have broken through the order of language in quest of stronger manifestations of their liberal moods. 'Language,' says this critic, '. . . is an imperfect vehicle for thought. It expresses the half but not the demi-semi tones. . . . To convey some shadowy sense of the inexpressible, we can only essay the use of what the laws of harmony pronounce to be discords – marriages, or combinations of sounds hitherto kept apart; the significance of which we *feel*, though we cannot analyse our motives in applying them. Great men – popular writers – have been moved to the schism before now, though it was not the schism that made them popular. Take a single illustration – from Tennyson: –

". . . with a common will
Here in *this roaring moon of daffodil*
And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast." '

The writer in question goes on to provoke the wonder of his reader by making a picture of the brilliant moon 'anchored up there in the flood – stem-

ming it – rocking on it. . . . An *im*pression has been given *ex*pression, in fact, by means of a discord.' He hopes to move his readers to something like a reverent dismay. See, he seems to say, what a poet will do if he has a mind to astonish you; how he defies your customary interpretations, and takes the language into his own hands, and how well it is that there should be someone to justify and to explain these brave conquests of fresh speech. 'What moon was ever built up' (says this eulogist) 'of daffodil and crocus? What moon ever roared? Yet the daring phrase (Who shall have the daring to deny it?) makes real in two words what descriptive classicism could not have compassed in fifty.'

And lo! all this is because the critic, apparently unaccustomed to an older poetic fashion, did not know that Tennyson had put the word 'moon' in place of the word 'month' as a mere equivalent! No more daring than this is the redoubtable phrase, no more impression than this is here, no more discord; no more schism, or sense of the inexpressible; and no blow is struck at descriptive classicism. Tennyson, in truth, is by no means the man to strike such blows, but precisely the man to take a somewhat older form of a word as the more romantic: such is moon for month. To call the windy month of March 'the roaring moon' is so exceedingly Tennysonian that no

sound of voice or trick of manner could be more personal. The habit and action of your friend, the custom of his hands, the inflexion of his tones, are not more charged with the associations of his name than is this phrase for March burdened with the whole legend of Tennyson. It breathes his breath, which is his spirit.

No poet was ever more readily contented than he with the language as he found it; provided only he might rediscover these little bygone fashions – such as to say parcel for part, and traveller's joy for clematis. He took a pleasure in restoring these as a kind of decoration; not because he intended 'to convey some shadowy sense of the inexpressible,' but because it was a pity that pretty and favourable phrases should be lost, and because these in particular seemed proper to the polished antiquity, the dainty Middle Ages, of which he makes a show that is so bright and so decorous, and, being called manly, does, like other things that are definitely called manly, perhaps vaguely miss that mark. Tennyson loved the picturesque word, and if his readers take less delight than he in moon for month, they make amends by confessing the new poetry wherewith he was able to transfigure a modern word. Lawn, for example, I protest that neither the word nor the thing pleases me – but only in Tennyson's page lawn is wonderful as though

it had never been dull; 'The mountain lawn was dewy-dark.' It is not, this time, that the garden poet brings the morning-peaks too near, or ranks them in his own peculiar garden-plots, but that the word withdraws, the lawn goes aloft alone, and is as wild as snow. And it is the same with many another word or phrase changed, by passing into his vocabulary, into something rich and strange.

The less need had he of breaking through the bonds of language, he who was pleased with a very little measure of quaint English, as though he had found a treasure, and he, moreover, who could make a drawing-room word spiritual. He needed no such acts of violence, and they are alien to him. Moon for month is right Tennyson, and 'roaring' – if it has its own violence, somewhat less than strong – is splendid, for it is the very March. Who is not filled by this verse with the spirit of the dawning month of flowers and storms? In that verse the golden soft names of daffodil and crocus are caught by the gale as you speak them, in a fine disproportion with that energy and gloom.

No other has sung March with so early and magical a voice. Birds on the swinging grey branch singing in cloudy daybreak are not newer, nor the shattered lights of windy morning wilder, nor the fires of a scattered sunset broken upon the flying east. March

is Tennyson's. A reader might well give many pages of the delicate Idylls for one March passage in the 'May Queen': 'All in the wild March morning,' or –

'The trees began to whisper and the wind began to roll.

* * * * *

It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all.'

Like to this wild and new poetry in the verses of Tennyson's youth is the poetry, new and wild after fifty years, of the sonnet on the Roaring Moon. It was the new spirit of the apprehension of nature, an increase in the number of the possessions of poetry, and it is this to-day when other things, such as the shores that are 'smitten' and even the 'dim rich city,' no longer seem to us so fine. If other boasts of Tennyson's poetry also should pass out of the true treasury, and if perhaps the most ordinarily conspicuous of its qualities should be among those that pass, there is always the Vision of nature abiding as he knew it first; a sun, a dazzling darkness, a night, a breeze. Who does not know the moments when Tennyson turns his face to that apparition? Not at all in certain pages; fully and with the peace and perception of exalted sense, with their splendour and peace, in the poetry of 'The Passing of Arthur,' and again in pas-

sages of 'In Memoriam' and 'The Vision of Sin.' Was he, indeed, the first? Blake, with the more exalted senses of night and dreams, seems to be there before him. It is difficult to say of any man that he was the first. But it is certain that Tennyson gave these visions to the world and transfigured the words. Through him Napoleon's sun of Austerlitz rises, for us, with a brighter menace upon arms and the plain; through him Fielding's 'most melancholy sun' lights him to the setting forth on his last voyage with such an immortal gleam, denying hope, as would not have illumined for us the memory of that seaward morning, had Tennyson never written.

In short, what he did was precisely *not* the compelling of English poetry to make a roaring moon out of daffodils. All his greatness, all his character, all his vision, all his (comparative) limitation of intellect were against such adventures. He never set out upon those ways. He never found, as the critic who praises him for the roaring daffodil moon says he found, 'that the conservative and the classical are not necessarily adequate to the expression of intricate modern moods.' His modern moods were never too intricate for himself. But he had his foppery, whereby 'month' seemed to him too prosaic a word for that sonnet. By the way, there is a passage in the 'Idylls' which speaks of twelve months as 'twelve sweet

moons.' Would our critic have praised him for the schism, the style, the audacity of lighting the night of his romance with twelve satellites where the conservative and the classical had seen but one since the beginning of letters? Why not? Why should not twelve sweet moons in a single sky convey as good 'a sense of the inexpressible' as a roaring moon of daffodil and crocus?

And the appreciator of Tennyson might write an essay to show that it was splendid to see twelve moons aloft at once; and Tennyson – Tennyson did but mean to name a twelvemonth!

*

THERE must be many to pity the village now (1900) more and more in fear of the motor-car. For the village of history, standing in the way of an army, for Bazeilles in flames, for the hamlet in famine among stony hills, for the little stopping-places of the march of great plagues, there has been that generalized sympathy which replies to the appeal of historical rhetoric. But terror – in those who have a right to it, that is, terror in the tethered and the weak – may well merit a compassionate thought. It is humane to protest against the action of one who would frighten a captive; birds in a cage, sheep in a fold, malefactors in prison, or children in school, are not to be threatened or alarmed: it is a double cruelty to flutter them in their bonds; and the bird of Juliet's 'Wanton,' launched on the wing and plucked back from flight, must not be sent on that short journey with outcries and menacing hands. In like manner the village cannot escape or be scattered; it is a roadside colony; the road serves it and ranges its little houses. It is bound to the road for all its affairs. The woman at work watches her children from the window, where they tumble more softly for the dust. But it is the road that has brought distress to her who worked and watched at once; the road with its English turn, its

winding, the gentle groping of English road-making, round by this man's close and that man's croft, feeling its way, guided by many a forgotten hand to spare forgotten rights. To-day it is precisely the wandering of that lingering pilgrim, the road of our fathers, that brings the wheels of the motor upon the villagers unawares. Not many may be the misfortunes; but the fear of them can never rest, from the first step of the foot of the child in the morning to the last at night. The rough hand of a woman hales him into the house from such a playground.

Rough is no doubt the hand; there may be many a rude voice or heart within the single street, yet the village is helpless and weak. It is impossible to send the mind abroad to view the scattered villages of the world and not to attribute to them the characters of innocence. These little folded flocks of mankind are far apart, on hills and plains, and by the rivers that thread valleys, and everywhere they are much at the mercy of the world. The sheep of that fold stand close, as though the sheep-dog had encircled them at a run, or they throng within a wall, or, unwalled, stray a little way, laxly gathered; white members of the flock, unalarmed, loiter on the road, the latest laggard belonging rather to the wilderness. These are the villages of peace and pasture. In the valley, loud with the hurry of a sub-alpine stream, your long

business-village has many a wheel turned, and there the country factories of the Continent are setting up a hundred industries. The hill-village is of older habits, and clings to the feet of the castle on the scarped ranges of Italy; from the windows of the tower you look down into the little courts and the terraces, netted in and out with vines, upon which open dark houses, step above step. The English country householder takes trouble to put the cottage out of sight, to plant out, at any rate, if he does not pull down, so that nothing poor may mar the smoothness of the view; if there is a village well away from the park railing, let it at least be 'embosomed' in trees. But the lord of an Italian castle has the villagers under his gate, whose houses are rock of his rock, whose church-bells in the night will not let him sleep, when, in sudden storms, the people wake to pray for their crops, whose diseases and distress make a child-like outcry not to be shut out, and who sing in his hearing too. From far below the walls of one certain south-alpine castle, from the rock lower than its Roman substructure, rises at intervals of day and night the cries of a villager, Monna Pina (Giuseppina), who is tormented by neuralgia. The pain of hearing those screams has never been evaded. And when the aged woman climbs up to the castle kitchen for her daily dinner, you may say how much you pity

her, and she tells you in her grave and tragic voice how great are her sufferings, 'un dolor tremendo.' Soon, however, comes, to tend the castle vines, the village wit; he receives the equivalent of three pounds a year for ringing the church bells day or night, and makes out a living with a little field and garden work.

The fancy ranging among villages sees many kinds, but all are alike helpless and unarmed. But in years of peace they were unalarmed until now. To one man's thought the world is a world of nations, to another's a world of cities, to the thought of another, again, a world of families. For there is the unit of politics, that of sociology, and so forth. The world of villages is inconspicuous, but one may imagine the village a better representative of mankind than any other – it makes a better, or, at any rate, a more innocent figure under the eye of heaven. One might show a hamlet to the stars and not feel too much misgiving. It is not without grief, therefore, that we see a new century bring dismay to the cluster of houses and the timid street. 'Fear not,' we should wish to say, 'fear not, little flock.'

*

THE island of Jersey looks, as you draw near from the sea, like a toy island made by a toymaker of small invention. It is evenly and closely set into a straight-topped wall of brownish cliff, and no height of hill rears a head anywhere against the straight-cut sky. You wonder why it is there at all, and your idle wonder explains itself when you consider that a peak of some sort commonly explains an island. The island is there, you think, because it is the summit of an ocean mountain, and the peak, whether small or great, is the tip-top of the summit. But here is a little flat tableland – a low table, such as is set in a children's nursery for tea, a table near the ground. For in this prim island you neither see a height nor divine one within the walls. There is the horizon; and a very little higher, and no less level (or hardly) is the top of the dull island. You follow its coast and skirt its bays and headlands, and see nothing, mile by even mile, to break the long, low summit, or, as it were, justify the island. It remains unexcused, a long box of which the lid fits well, strangely standing level on the level sea. It looks not so much a toy as a box of toys, tightly packed. Even the half-score of bays hardly show; and this is a lesson in the point of view – the trick played by foreshortening with

these pretty coves and inlets seen from the sea, perhaps brown in the cold light of a grey dawn. Land there, however, and sleep in a house terraced on a bay, look towards the sun and out to the sapphire sea, and you find the shallow brown box to be a lovely coast of gold and azure. A pine, an ilex, grave against the blue, even suggest by a space of colour and light another and a far different littoral, where the Mediterranean lies at the foot of mountains carrying the vine and crowned by the belfry. It is but a false likeness, and the island tree is less the pine than the poplar, that rustic tree of the pasture and vegetable-field, the tree that is mobile as the breeze of Cephalus, cool as the cheeks of Artemis, and fresh as streams.

Turn your face seaward from the flat summit of the razed land and you find that, though this is a toy island, it is strangely set in an heroic sea. The ocean colour has an almost southern violence, the violence of blue that is justified by the sun. Now and then, though rarely, it has the vast southern peace, the unvexed and unshattered surface, with the few slow sparkles, of the summer Mediterranean. One Ligurian thing it has not – the soft and sombre sirocco weather, cloudy but coloured, with the gloomy blue of the over-shadowed sea, background to the cypress. When it is grey weather in Jersey, it is a northern

grey. The mere rocks, however, have some heroic character. Forget the tame and unimposing cliff, the natural embankment of the little coast, and the rocks, where the foam runs, are great. A coast of frightful dangers is this, and Victor Hugo adorned it with the rhetoric of his declaimed astonishment – raising his great aspect opposite to the great aspect of seas and rocks, nearly matched with them. Yes, the rocks might be outworks of a noble coast instead of this shallow tableland. No mountain island could be more awfully guarded than this costly toy. Submerged rocks, and those that barely look from their immovable ambush, and sudden towers and pinnacles out at sea, have torn many a ship and sent her crew, drowned and drifting, round the headlands.

If you will you may follow the flatness of the low upland nearly all round its few miles on level roads, finding many a field of gold wheat, tender-coloured oats, and silken barley overlooking the sea; here the second crop of potatoes is gathered into crates, and there they are tying the young tomato-plants to their sticks. The peasant-proprietor is evident, for his sons are at work, and his wife and daughter in sun-bonnets. He has unfortunately cut down many of his lovely orchards for the sake of that nugget of Jersey wealth, the young potato, but having brought down the price of this treasure by much production,

he, ever alert, is now planting orchards again, for his sons. Not that one grudges the fields given to the potato. Nay, many a flower-garden, many a lawn, much gravel, and a hundred thousand rare conifers, would one cheerfully give for the prettiness of the pea-field with its twigs delicately etched, for the cabbage – here a very majestic growth, for the cabbage has dignity if the cliff has not – for the prosperous potato, for the curly tomato-plant tied to a thousand canes, for an orchard on a hill with the shadows of its trees on the climbing field, or the moon among its apple-leaves.

Not following the flat road of the coast plateau, but turning into the narrow interior, you find plenty of valleys, despite the lack of hills. You go down from the belt of tableland into grassy ravines and rich hollows of hay and harvest. Their sides are cut into steps for use of precious earth. But their depths have no rivers. Nowhere is the dweller quite out of hearing of the soft loudness of the sea, but there is no voice of streams. The island has its little watershed, to its little north, but the rills therefrom are few and secret. A score of harvests in the inexpressible sweetness of this cultivated country within are furthered by the harvest of the shore. All the year more or less of fertilizing seaweed is gathered from the bays; but the untrodden fields of the deep have

their spring, their renewal beneath the tides, their abundant summer, and their autumn, when the salt foliage and long grasses wither and are shed adrift and cast on the sands by storms. Then the islanders, in tempestuous winds that catch their burdens by the top, gather a gloomy harvest in all their bays, with rake, pitchfork and cart, and such familiar instruments of hayfields in the sun. With the *vraic*, called sea-wrack in islands nearer England, they enrich the fields on which they prosper. From many an English town and from unhappy and homeless English country, it is no small pleasure to turn for a summer-while to this place of intent and instant labour, this little commonwealth, and garden of tender food.

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When 'something' is done for agriculture in England, it must, to be effectual, be something considerable, enough to have an effect upon the landscape. Dwellers in the English country do not seem to realize that theirs is, next after the desert or the prairie, often the most deserted of countries, the most unbroken solitude, the most idle, and the least adorned with life. A sign of life, a trace and vestige of man, it does show indeed, and that sign is the hedgerow; but the man who made the hedgerow has vanished away.

Who, one wonders, was the man who made the hedgerow – so many countless miles of it? He must have cleared and planted, clipped and trained, at an enormous rate. He must have been busy in the fields. There must have been hewing and felling that shook the hills, before the hedgerow-man began his minor labours, of course; but when he was about them, making his patchwork of the hill-sides, and never tiring of the irregular angles of his universal green field, it must have been a populous, lively, and enterprising England that he worked in.

The result of his hedgerow is that there hardly ever was a landscape more arbitrarily marked than ours, more tampered with, none in which the natural

curves of hills, the long lines of subsiding ground, the *direction* of nature, the indications of construction, are more incessantly contradicted. Except in the few places where the downs are barren or the forests thick, the landscape of England is the least natural of landscapes, and the one where this little act of boundary – the making of the hedgerow – plays off the fact of human property most conspicuously against all the other facts of a country view. The length, the wandering away, of a rhythmic hill is interrupted, tripped up, shaken to pieces, by the squares and oblongs of the hedgerow. The very cloud-shadows seem to have their line of flight hampered, and the form of their rapid darkness and of their blue disguised. They are snatched less smoothly from a mile of jagged chess-board than from a mile of wheat. And the long ray of the sun follows less simply.

If, then, we say that an English landscape is deserted, this is not to say that it is untouched; far from it. There is no kind of country – to take a typical Surrey or Sussex view – so much touched. Country, moreover, is made to be touched. But the strange thing is that being so much touched as it is, our country should be also solitary. The hedgerow man did his work and went quite away. He defined and made secure the limits and divisions of property;

and now that the property can no longer feed him, his divisions stand. His lop-sided quadrangles are as jealous as ever, his exclusions as insistent as ever, but the inclusions have ceased to be of the old importance.

Fields that to-day stand idle are fields once prepared for work. They are braced up, as though the land were precious; they fit close; there is nothing left over after their skilful cutting-out except the band of green that borders the road, for the safety of the former travellers from any possible enemy in ambush. Otherwise, all that is not common and public property is very carefully defined as private property, except only where some thin soil is obviously fit for nothing but wild flowers. The hedgerow has it all in keeping.

And for what? There is nobody about. The cattle that would hardly provide the *rôti* of one evening in West Kensington, graze in little groups and apparently take care of each other. There is no knitting-girl to watch her father's cow; and this orderliness among the animals reminds you suddenly that there are no people. The villages are far apart, and small enough; but it is not the lack of villages that seems so strange in this well-partitioned land, but rather the great tracts of country without any houses for the country people. There are hardly any dwell-

ings; on some lines of railway there are hardly any orchards.

The nation, it would seem, is not in need of vegetables. Where are the long plantations of softly-flowering beans on their delicately etched sticks that are necessary for the population of Germany? Where are the fields of peas that cover there a long hill-side? Where are the valleys full of fruit-blossom? As things are now, the cultivation, where there is any, has often an exaggerated richness and detail, so that the small part of the landscape that is not mere grass and hedgerows is an over-careful garden. Either there are no strawberries at all, or there are strawberries as corpulent as those of a private gardener. That, however, which will make England various, and cover her with a bloom of colour and grey, is that kind of cultivation which brings the land halfway from the field to the garden. In such land are grown the things that are still half-wild – peas such as they give you in Italy, peas that have a refined poverty and taste of the field; strawberries of modest size, with a scent of the woods still about them; and fruit which might not take a prize but which makes a gay dessert. It makes a gay orchard country, too. There is nothing better than a land of orchards; the cherry district of Sinzig, on the Rhine, is there to witness, and the rosy Tyrol in May.

Vegetables make large and simple effects of colour when they are in long plantations, and a very beautiful soft general greyness when they are in small and mingled patches, as in Tuscany; too busy, perhaps, for the painter, though the delicate multitude of detail is charming when you have the exceeding simplicity of an Alp or an Apennine as the sole and remote blue background. There is a leap from the minute and countless tassels of maize close at hand to the unmarked, unscarred, distant mountain, plain as the sky. The people at work stand breast-high in the wheat, and head-high in the maize; and all round the agricultural year they have something to do in their garden-fields. And never does a human figure look better than when so measured.

Such a country is sown throughout with houses. And there may be many a tourist in whose eyes the coasts of Italy, cultivated in every inch and sprinkled with dwellings, have hardly the look of what he calls 'country' at home. But he has grown too much used to calling a solitude 'country.' Solitude is for the common, the down, the ranch, the barren shore, the impenetrable woods, and the naked mountains. There are always rocks for the dwelling of Love in Virgil.

There are always tracts of this world that shake off all the harvests, nay, all the seasons – snows that do

not vanish, undeciduous forests that do not alter, hills that keep their liberty and never felt the plough, never earned bread for man, and never fed his flocks. These indeed are solitudes. But what has solitude to do with the mere 'country'? That is for sowing and reaping, for the smoke of supper, for bells, for cattle, for cocks and hens, and for that long succession of harvests which we in this uncultivated country have almost forgotten. We know the hay-carrying, the hop-gathering, and the gathering in of grain; but we have ceased to know much of the cycle of minor harvests that keep men and women in the fields of cultivated Italy for ten months of the abundant year.

We have greater cities than Italy has; but she has one great city that we have not yet. It is the enormous city, rosy and white, terraced in gardens, rooted with red and grey, populous and gay, that is scattered all over her coasts, all over her 'country.' When 'something' has been done for agriculture in England, our country too will be none the worse for the scattering of such another town.

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SAND castles are well enough, and they are the very commonplace of the recollections of elders, of their rhetoric and of what they think appropriate for their young ones. Shingle and sand are good playthings, but absolute play is not necessarily the ideal of a child; he would rather have a frolic of work. Of all the early autumn things to be done in holiday time, that game with the beach and the wave is the least essentially autumnal and the least good for holiday-time. It is much to be wished that the children who are casting pebbles and digging trenches, might have instead a holiday experience of any of the harvests, an experience of the living year.

Not that the shore is everywhere so barren. The coast of the Londoners – all round the southern and eastern borders of England – is indeed the dullest of all sea-margins. But away in the gentle bays of Jersey the summer grows a crop of seaweed which the long ocean-wave leaves in noble curves upon the beach; for under the sunny water the sap in the seaweed has arisen in spring as it rises in the woods, and the storms have gathered the crops. The Channel Island people go gleaning after the sea, and store the seaweed for their fields. For your small proprietors, such as those who own these abundant

orchards of enormous fruit and dig these eager plantations of the earliest vegetables, are apt to go to nature for their *engrais*, when the large proprietor, probably, would go to some kind of chemical works. Thus the beaches of Jersey bays are not altogether barren, and have a kind of dead and accessory harvest for the farmer. After a night of storm these crops are stacked and carted and carried, the sea-wind catching away loose shreds from the summits of the loads.

Farther south, if the growth of the sea is not so put to use, the shore has yet its seasons. You could hardly tell, if you did not know the month, whether a space of sea or a series of waves, at Aldborough, say, or at Dover, were summer or winter water; but in those fortunate regions which are southern, yet not too southern for winter, and have thus the strongest swing of change and the fullest pulse of the year, there are a winter sea and a summer sea, brilliantly different, with a delicate variety between the hastening blue of spring and the lingering blue of September. And those are the seas to bathe in. There you bathe from the rocks, untroubled by tides, and unhurried by chills, and with no incongruous sun beating on your head while your fingers are cold. You bathe when the sun has set, and the vast sea has not a whisper; you know a rock in the distance where

you can rest; and where you float there float also, by you, opalescent jelly-fish, half transparent in the perfectly transparent water. An hour in the warm sea is not enough.

Rock-bathing is done on lonely shores. A city may be but a mile away, and the cultivated vineyards may be close above the seaside pine-trees, but the place is perfectly remote. You pitch your tent on any little hollow of beach. The next best bathing is from a boat, but this is less perfectly placid. There is something robustious about it; you cannot sit and rest. A charming Englishwoman who used to bathe with her children under the great rocks of her Mediterranean villa in the motionless white evenings of summer put white roses in her hair, and liked to sit out on a rock at sea where the first rays of the moon would touch her. You cannot do such things so well from a boat.

But if bathing from a rock is the best bathing, a 'dip' from the mere sand and shingle is quite the worst. The Channel is never clear. Whereas transparent water can be found off the Devonian coast, and the Cornish, and the Welsh, there is absolutely no limpid water whatever between England and France. You bathe, too, in the Channel in the very prose of the day. Nothing in the world is more uninteresting than eleven o'clock. It is the hour of

mediocrity under the best conditions; but eleven o'clock on a shingly beach, in a half-hearted summer, is a very common thing. Twelve has a dignity always, and everywhere its name is great. The noon of every day that ever dawned is in its place heroic. But eleven is worldly. One o'clock has an honest human interest to all persons wise enough to take the slenderest breakfast possible, and every hour of the summer afternoon, after three, has the grace of deepening and lingering life. To bathe at eleven, to bathe in the sun, to bathe in the wind, to bathe from a machine, to bathe in a narrow sea that is certainly not clear and is only by courtesy clean, to bathe in obedience to a tyrannical tide and in water that is always much colder then yourself, to bathe in a hurry and in public – this is to know nothing rightly of one of the greatest of all the pleasures that humanity takes with Nature.

The sea of Jersey has more the character of a real sea than of the straits. These temperate islands would be better called the Ocean Islands. When M. Edouard Pailleron was a boy and wrote poetry, he composed a letter to Victor Hugo, the address whereof was a matter of some thought. The final decision was to direct it, 'A Victor Hugo, Ocean.' It got there. It even received a reply: 'I am the Past, you are the Future; I am, etc.' If an English boy had

had the same idea the name of the Channel Islands would have spoilt it. 'A Victor Hugo, La Manche,' would hardly have interested the postal authorities so much; but 'the Channel' would have had no respect at all. Indeed, it is suggestive of nothing but steamers and of grey skies that have not the beauty of grey skies inland – formless grey skies, with their thin cloud torn to slender rags by a prevailing wind.

As for the children, to whom belongs the margin of the sea, machine-bathing at eleven o'clock will hardly furnish them with a magical early memory. Time was when this was made penitential to them, like the rest of life, upon a principle that no longer prevails. It was vulgarized for them and made violent. A bathing-woman, type of all ugliness in their sensitive eyes, came striding, shapeless, through the unfriendly sea, seized them if they were very young, ducked them, and returned them to the chilly machine, generally in the futile and superfluous saltness of tears. 'Too much of water had they,' poor infants. John Leech shows you the bathing-woman. We know now that her work was a dull and stupid kind of cruelty.

Without this, however, bathing in our uusual national conditions is not a keen delight. Happily there is the longer and more liberal pleasure of skipping into the waves merely bare-legged. But, in spite

of this – our climate being what it is, and our sea what it is, and our seaside towns what they are – a real child might have a more ecstatic memory of a day's work at any harvest than of a day's play upon the barren shore. To hold horses, to carry, to load, to be loaded, to gather, to go into barns, to heap together and shake down the good measure of an unmanageable harvest – these are pleasures which it is well if we can give now into the keeping of the memory of the man of thirty years hence. And this is said in spite of the plain truth that the seashore is the children's, and that St. Augustine, Isaac Newton, and Wordsworth had not a vision of the sea-beaches without a child there.

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SUMMER night in an English village has not yet been painted in its extraordinary delicacy of colour, or with one half of its own simplicity. Bright cottage lights under a dark sky we know in pictures well enough, and also the glows of a departing day full of the warmth of a fugitive sunset. But the beauty of one hour of late dusk has perhaps been somewhat hidden by its own ambiguity. Not all the windows are lighted; not all the light is gone from the sky, not all local colour is effaced. Not all the pollard trees have lost their dusky green, and you can see far enough to follow the subtle curve that chance long ago gave to the dwarfish street, deep-roofed, thick-walled, and warm.

The little town grew once, and the movement of life and growth is expressed in that wavering line of street, slight as the rudder tail of a swimming fish. Our eyes cannot take swift perspectives, for soon the tender curve brings the white of a little wall trending away to close up the distance. Everything is closed with the peculiar closeness of English life. All the people seem to be put away under white seals, and there is no sign of them, except the few weak and lovely lights of windows closed by blinds or by some other gentle shade. There is hardly one star

of naked flame in this by-street, only here and there a square of the most delicate thin light, liquid and cool, far too pale to be called golden, made beautiful by its relation to the blue of the profound cloud travelling from the west.

For the night is full of movement, and it seems as though the west wind itself blew the last daylight back against the east, streaming by water and wood. Nevertheless, so trim is the little street that it shows no sign of wind. It is closed against storm, light, and life; it stands low, solid, white, warmly covered, and with its trees pollarded. Not a bough, not a shutter, not a bird, not a child flutters or breaks bounds under the volleys of the cloudy wind. Nothing in the village moves, except the groups of unequal chimes setting forth eastward with the fragments of the broken day, as successive clouds blow light, blow dark. Violet-blue air, the soft, soft whiteness of the floor of the street, the more distinct whitewash, the dark roofs, the uncertain green, the tender lights and simple and square – these colours of the August evening of a country-town are colours of beauty without splendour.

There are no other sounds so appropriate, in its daytime, to the childish country-town as the voices of children. School hours seem to mark its long dusty day. There is never so much noise of wheels

but that the childish sounds – calling, crying, laughing, and footsteps – are free to float up in the buoyant silence. The stature of children is proper to every street, for whereas St. Peter's is but an indifferent big church for people 12 ft. high and their appropriate angels, and cities are measured for men as they are, the country-town had for its unit of height and breadth and length that of the child's body. The proportion is a child's, and the large roofs look as though you might pat the little township on the head. How otherwise should every man and woman walking into the shops and looking out of the upper windows look too large?

The country-town has all a child's own acquaintance with the soil. It loves to dig, and sits in the dust of the country road. There is nothing in this brief street that is not near. As you go by the little windows you are one of the family within. You rub shoulders with the eaves of unguarded cottages. You could touch almost all you see, as the little blank walls close in with the slight windings of the street. It is no doubt this simplicity of low walls, white and near, that helps so much the look of childishness. The great city has too many eyes for any intelligible expression. The light there is a spy darting in at a thousand thousand holes in search of paltry secrets, and the houses are too eager with their publicity of

windows. Moreover, what gives light to the inmates makes a darkness for the scenery, so that London looks so dark a town not only because of its smoky colour, but because of its almost continuous windows. This village has few windows, and many low sides of house-wall softly bright with whitewash, the thick and simple wall low and long under the ruddy brown of roofs of tile.

Needless to say, the best thing in the childish town and the village, of every size alike, is the strong hold they all have on the earth. Without 'areas' and without large shop-windows, the steady little houses show none of the ignominious weaknesses of cities. This is what brings the street so near. As you sit at breakfast in the small bow-window of the inn parlour, the wire blind puts you on intimate terms with the freckles of the schoolboys hunting lazy flies outside in the sun. The shadows of their heads darken your morning paper. Never before were you quite so close to the white hair of any old shepherd. He – too large for the little panes – trudges the pavement talking slowly about the market into your very ear. The little theatre is cramped. You fancy that by putting forth your hand you could help yourself to the distinct toys in the opposite toy-shop, with their reds and blues; and the splendid roses in the shallow windows breathe close to your breath. More

rare are the roses, however, than red geraniums, yellow calceolarias, and the cottager's dearer fuchsia. This last flower, with its unfashionable elegance, its drooping 1830 graces out of date, dangles genteelly in the lowlier windows, white, purple, and red.

But the field has now fewer colours than the little urban garden. Where poppies grow, indeed, they make August splendid, scarlet in dark fields as well as in the pale or golden. A few water-lilies are still afloat, and the moss in the woods has the ancient freshness that owns no season. But August has chiefly dim flowers that bear the scent of gentle burning – by no means the smell of fading nor the humid odour of October, but the breath of drought. Roadside clematis, though still in flower, has this scent, and so have the ashes of privet in the hedges. Sweet dust is sprinkled on the wild-rose bushes, and the principal wayfaring flowers are a little yellow snapdragon and camomile daisies. But the principal work of the sun is the gilding of the wheat-fields. The country has a sunburnt cheek, and is hooded in that humble colour like a young Elizabethan loved and reproached at once for her brownness, by her poet. She must look to it that she be useful and kind – *bonne comme le pain*, as the French say – or we know of roses and lilies to rebuke her with.

You may see the wheat, oats, and barley, not only

at the two ends of the streets of a childish town, but straight through the little houses. In the daytime, before that early sealing up, there is a visible sunny way, clear through every cottage. Not one of them makes a secret of its loaded back-garden and the clattering red-brick path leading thereto. White pinafores passing to and fro flash lights into the transparent shadows of the narrow house; the roofs, so low to the street, stoop lower still in the red back-yards until their moss touches the hollyhocks, and beyond the nearest paling is the August country, with half the grain now in sheaves.

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GRATEFUL for many millions of leaves that have not once grown dull to an alert and constant love of the woods since they first unfolded, one has the leisure of August for perceiving all the differences of the green. It is no longer a difference of maturity, for all the trees have darkened to their final tone, and stand in their differences of character and not of mere date. Almost all the green is grave, not sad and not dull. It has a darkened and a daily colour, in majestic but not obvious harmony with dark grey skies, and might look, to inconstant eyes, as prosaic after spring as eleven o'clock looks after the dawn. Gravity is the word – not solemnity as towards evening, nor threat as at night. The daylight August trees are signs of common beauty, common freshness, and a mystery familiar and abiding as night and day. In childhood we all have a more exalted sense of dawn and summer sunrise than we ever fully retain or quite recover; and also a far higher susceptibility for April and April evenings – a heartache for them, which in riper years is gradually and irretrievably consoled.

But, on the other hand, childhood has so quickly learned to find daily things tedious, and familiar things importunate, that it has no great delight in the mere middle of the day, and feels weariness of

the summer that has ceased to change visibly. Their day for admiration comes later. The poetry of day and of late summer becomes perceptible to mature eyes that have long ceased to be wearied, have taken leave of all fatigue, and cannot now find anything in nature too familiar; eyes which have, indeed, lost sight of the further awe of midsummer daybreak, and no longer see so much of the past in April twilight as they saw when they had no past; but which look freshly at the dailiness of green summer, of early afternoon, of every possible kind of sky, and of the darkened elms.

For elms, of all August trees, would perhaps most seem dull, if trees could be dull. There is a beautiful commonplace about their small leaves of a rather hard green – a green that takes a dusky colour with maturity, older than that of beech or oak at their oldest; moreover, the leaf sits close and has little liberty. The elm is insensitive, a steady presence in the field. It has the far range of a tree of great stature – the far sight of a tree with its top lighted by a late sun and looking across at the sunset; but it is not otherwise very responsive to wind or light. Not unwelcome is this serious tree, unthrilled. It is a tree, and noble. But if you could go by all the woods, across all the old forests that are now meadowlands set with trees, and could walk a county gathering

trees of one kind in your mind as you walk a garden collecting flowers of one kind, would not the harvest be a harvest of poplars?

A veritable passion for poplars is a most intelligible passion. The eyes do gather them, far and near, on a whole day's journey. Not one is unperceived, even though great timber should be passed, and hill-sides dense and dark with trees. The fancy makes a poplar day of it. Immediately the country looks alive with signals; for the poplars everywhere reply to the glance. The woods are all various, but the poplars are separate. All their many kinds (and aspens, their kin, must be counted with them) shake themselves perpetually free of the motionless forest. It is easy to gather them. Glances sent into the far distance pay them a flash of recognition of their gentle flashes; and as you journey you are suddenly aware of them close by. Light and the breezes are as quick as the eyes of a poplar-lover to find the willing tree that dances to be seen.

No lurking for them, no reluctance. You could never make for yourself an oak day so well. You would be obliged to look keenly for your oaks, and you would miss many from your gathering. But the poplars are alert enough even if you are travelling by express train; they have an alarum aloft, and do not sleep. From within some little grove of other trees a

single poplar makes a slight sign; or a long row of poplars suddenly sweeps the wind. They are salient everywhere, and full of replies. They are as fresh as streams. It is difficult to realize a drought where there are many poplars. And yet their green is not rich. The coolest have a colour much mingled with a cloud-grey. It does not need fresh and simple eyes to recognize their unfaded life. When the other trees grow dark and keep still, the poplar and the aspen do not darken – or hardly – and the deepest summer will not find a day in which they do not keep awake. No waters are so vigilant, even where a lake is bare to the wind.

When Keats said of his Dian that she fastened up her hair 'with fingers cool as aspen leaves,' he knew the coolest leaf in the world. It is a coolness of colour as well as of a leaf which the breeze takes on both sides – the greenish and the greyish. The poplar green has no glows, no gold. It is an austere colour, as little rich as the colour of willows, and less silvery than theirs. The sun can hardly gild it; but he can shine between. Poplars and aspens let the sun through with the wind. You may have the sky sprinkled through them in high midsummer, when all the woods are close. Sending your fancy poplar-gathering, then, you ensnare wild trees, beating with life. No fisher's net ever took such glancing fishes,

nor did the net of a constellation's shape ever enclose more vibrating Pleiades.

Because the green of trees and of all vegetation is so universal and so full of differences, Nature does not scatter the colour elsewhere. For the sake of their green leaves, flowers are not to wear that colour for themselves, and in May the other colours have the victory, and the colour which is never a flower's is eclipsed. In the emerald is the most intense and brilliant green, and in another place, not so bright but translucent – that is, under the keel of a boat on a sunny sea. Green, too, is one of the many regions of the sky in some southern sunsets.

Out of our houses green ebbed, some few years ago, as though a tidal wave of colour had retired from these sapless cretonnes and wall-papers. It had had too high a flood of fashion. And the fault of so much of that once modish sage-green paper was that it was too dark. The colour was well, indeed, but for London use the sage-leaf colour should be taken in a higher tone. Not that dark walls are so unwelcome for their own sake, but that all except very bright things are apt to lose their outline against them. All dark hair becomes too vague, and few faces are able to look well without the distinct form of their hair.

As to green for garments, it was dear to the earlier poets of many nations, who arrayed women in green

and garlands as the mode proper to verse. That the painters used much less green apparel is, of course, because the Madonna colours were blue and red. But a green dress is very common for accessory figures; it is made welcome for secondary saints. Francabigio, in a Florentine fresco, has devised a dress of two greens that might be worth copying.

The excellent taste of children is offended by ornamental trees; it knows how dull are shrubberies, and has no delight in that pointed conifer of which the lower symmetries sweep a rigid lawn. The child loves the appropriate trees; in England, trees that have their foliage sprinkled on the tender sky, letting the light through; he knows how dull is the 'close shrubbery' to which Jane Austen's heroines betook themselves when a 'hurry of spirits' befell them. Oak, ash, elm, aspen, beech – who, man or child, with a heart for nature, would change these for the pointed conifer, or the araucaria? And yet how little adult heart there must be for nature, since those who use trees for decoration use those rare conifers, rather than others! You do not find the summer of the country-house garden-walk cooled by aspens, or poplars keeping the approaches of the villa. The country is one thing, the inhabitants seem to say, but when you come to ornament, that is another.

And it is, most lamentably, ornament that was sought by those who replanted the lovely Littoral. I would not be thought to approve of none but indigenous trees. In a country of so old a civilization as this, that would be an exclusion strange in its results. For the characteristic olive tree itself, which has made the coast its own, and ruled its colour, is not indigenous, though we have to go back to antiquity for the day when it was made Roman and Italian. Nor is the vine indigenous in Burgundy, its throne. On the other hand, the eucalyptus, surely a modern tree on the Riviera, is exquisite there. At once dark and silvery, delicate and keen, with its scimitar-leaves, its lovely spring and droop – a tree of distinction – it has come to a right new home at the noble north of this noble sea. Should not amends be made to it because it was virtually born an exile? It is a willing traveller to its better home; easily transplanted, soon accustomed. And it owes its rescue from that dull part of the world that lies south of the Equator – the part of the world that was merely barbarous when it was old, and has become merely provincial since it is new – to the virtue of use. It has the utilitarian honour proper to trees. But it must not become too frequent here. It must leave the heights, where olives cease, to chestnut woods, the promontory to the pine, the church to the cypress. I would not have it to sup-

plant the old trees, but to stand here and there, far apart, friend with the dazzling sea, with the golden sun, with the blank, bright wall, and with the old Genoese palace that is coloured like a sea-rose; friend with the vine.

The plane-trees planted for shade in the streets of many Riviera towns – those towns at least that are within the French frontier since French frontiers were thus arbitrarily enlarged half a century ago – are always happy. Being intended for something besides decoration, they do decorate; and this is an uncovenanted grace granted to other arts than the planting of trees. The plant is perfect, and none the less, as English readers may be slow to think, when pollarded. An avenue of planes, pale grey in winter leaflessness, along the straight pale grey street, makes a gay and lightsome harmony, and the rusty delicate red of their abundant old last year's apples, or burrs, adds the smouldering of a warm colour. When their leaves are out I do not choose them for Riviera trees; but the fact that they are deciduous in a country of evergreens gives them a kind of humble charm. They are citizens, with a dignity of their own, in a country of princes.

It is not the planted plane, then, nor the planted eucalyptus, as, needless to say, it is not the older-planted olive, that does wrong to the character of the

Maritime Alps descending to the sea. The pine and the cypress once held the lower coast, the chestnut the higher. The two first-named have given way to the lovely cultivation, and make the more precious show for their distinguished fewness. But the palm it is of which I complain – and shall complain in vain. The hotel-keeper and the hotel garden have brought the palm. Stumpy and corpulent in its hundreds, it is nothing but a boast and brag, an advertisement, a proclamation, a decoration, and a touting.

★

TALLER than the grass and lower than the trees, there is a growth that also feels the implicit spring. It has been more abandoned to winter than even the short grass shuddering under a wave of east wind, more than the dumb trees. For the multitudes of sedges, rushes, canes, and reeds were the appropriate lyre of the cold. On them the nimble winds played their dry music. They were part of the winter. It looked through them and spoke through them. And they were spears and javelins in array to the sound of the drums of the north.

The winter takes fuller possession of these things than of those that stand solid. The sedges whistle his tune. They let the colour of his light look through – low-flying arrows and bright bayonets of winter day. So do the sedges and rushes let the summer through also; they and the slender growths of a homely garden are alike intricate with light. And the seasons take full possession of the things that change so little – the Campagna, the prairie, the ilex woods, and these free tracts of so many kinds of reeds. They grow in their own races and after their own kind, somewhat as nations. There are marshes where no sedges grow, and the people of that country do not thatch their roofs. And there are other tracts of

tidal-river land where the sedges are innumerable. They flower into a dreary little grey plume, and their marshes make dark regions in a landscape, like perpetual cloud-shadows, most simple, most fit to lie by the simple sea and under the simple sky.

Gems are most beautiful between the cutting and the setting; they lose when the jeweller puts a gold boundary to their light. So is a field better without a hedgerow. And the bulrushes should grow in long fields, appropriated perhaps, but without the sign of appropriation. As a rule the multitudes of all reeds and rushes do grow out of bounds. They belong to the margins of lands, the space between the farms and the river, beyond the pastures, and where the marsh in flower becomes perilous footing for the cattle. They are the fringe of the lowlands, the sign of streams. They grow tall between you and the near horizon of flat lands. They etch their sharp lines upon the sky; and near them grow flowers of stature, including the lofty little yellow lily.

Ours is a summer full of voices, and therefore it does not so need the sound of rushes; but they are most sensitive to the stealthy breezes, and betray the passing of a wind that even the tree-tops knew not of. Sometimes it is a breeze unfelt, and the stiff sedges

whisper it along a mile of marsh. To the strong wind they bend, showing the silver of their sombre little tassels as fish show the silver of their sides turning in the pathless sea. They are unanimous. A field of tall flowers tosses many ways in one warm gale, like the many lovers of a poet who have a thousand reasons for their love; but the rushes, more strongly tethered, are swept into a single attitude, again and again, at every renewal of the storm.

They are probably outlaws. They abide upon margins, as the gipsies make a home upon the green margins of a road. No wild flowers, however wild, are rebels. The copses and their primroses are good subjects, the oaks are loyal. Now and then, though, exists a sort of suspicion of some of the other kinds of trees – the Corot trees. Standing at a distance from the more ornamental trees, from those of fuller foliage, and from all the indeciduous shrubs and the conifers (manifest property, every one), two or three translucent aspens, with which the very sun and the breath of air are entangled, have sometimes seemed to wear a certain look – an extra-territorial look, let us call it. The landowner is inclined to shake a doubtful head at them.

When the sap is rising up towards the high-water mark of May, in the woods, in the flowers, in the

grasses, and in that growth which is none of these, you can close your eyes and see nothing, for a moment, of the new season, except its reeds and rushes. It is a world. All the rivers of England are grey with sedges or green with reeds. Flocks of birds scream among the sedges of Baltic streams. The wild multitude is everywhere, and nowhere in a more charming race than that of the tall cane, growing with its actual joint, and sheathed in its little coat of husk.

Not a ravine, not a hollow, in the maritime mountains of the South, in which it does not grow, slender-leaved. It is the covert of violets. 'After the St. Sebastian,' is the saying – and St. Sebastian's day is the 20th of January – 'you may begin to look for the violet.' It is among the canes that you search; for the canes grow in the shelter, in the little hollows of the cultivated lands. Olive and vine are above, but the little sudden dips and dells are emancipated, and do no work. The violet is dark and sweet in them, and the narcissus comes soon after. There is a thread of rivulet, too thin to be discerned, except by the gay green. Later, in the warm weather, this will be the place for fireflies. They will throb in and out among the canes, with their soft flashes. Where there are canes there are no sedges – these are of the north world, and those of the south.

Nor are the sub-Alpine streams rivers of reeds. They are shallow rivers running clear upon their stones through chestnut woods – 'shallow rivers,' with 'falls.'

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For all our travelling, we have hardly yet found the slender line upon the earth, sufficiently within reach, and something short of the Tropics, where there is no cold wind in winter. It does not seem much to ask – the opportunity of friendship for a year at a time with the air that comes so near, has us by the hand, touches our blood, and blows close upon the fires of life within. Who is willingly thus intimate with the unfriendly? Such nearness with a north-east wind is a familiarity wanting sympathy – the intercourse, or something like it, of the mercantile world. There are some men so nipping and eager as to welcome a stranger or an enemy of their own temper. They live with pleasure in the friction of the north-east wind. They challenge intrusion, and their house of life is full of violence.

But the peaceful and the tender have no real joy except in the midst of air that is a friend – a friend of moods, of wildness and mildness, too strong to be breathed at times – all but tossing you, yet tossing you in an embrace, rough and reckless but unarmed. Never from the south-west, and hardly from the west, comes any other than a friend: the wind from those horizons finds your doors and windows set open and has your confidence. Even a certain degree of

wild cold, or rather an enormous freshness – the cold that comes of a great velocity and volume of coolness – is no enemy in that welcome wind. One would not be away from England on those days, whether gentle or wild; but would it were possible to find a place out of reach of the wind with weapons.

Egypt itself is not that place. She has days, dark-blue and golden, when the waters of the Nile and of the canal by Alexandria are whipped by the hard wind; there is a sharp flutter of Arab garments and a shaken sail. Algiers has a coldness all her own. As to Italy, there is no cleft of any southward mountain there that is safe from an Alpine wind. Strange to say, the Italian people, more than any, give a welcome to the northern and eastern air, the fine and subtle, the stranger to human blood. This is because the Italian skin is thick. The unchanging Italian colour, its magnolia white and its warm shadows, testify to that thickness, and neither alterations of health nor alterations of weather mark the day upon those even faces. The Italian nerves are protected against the irritation of the cold draught of a *tramontana*; but not so ours. The delicate and sensitive northern skin which, by a common paradox, often looks coarse because it ill endures ill-usage, gives no protection against the sunny wind of a southern winter; nor

does it protect against the blunter cold of our own Decembers.

A diligent search has not found any place of hiding from the Alpine wind. It is of such quality that mere shelter does not give a hiding-place; its presence is everywhere, even in a bay under the mountain, open to nothing but the sun. The *tramontana* is there, simply because it is a *tramontana* day, and is obviously not to be evaded. The sunshine itself is interpreted by the wind, and not a sound of the winter morning but has its quality from the wind. If there is a cloud at all, it flies, lonely and separate, wearing the wind's colour; it is small, round, cold, and an outcast, high aloft. The clouds from the south look like heralds; this from the north like a fugitive. They turn their faces; this turns its back – which is merely the plain consequence of our looking naturally southward, but also seems in keeping.

Whereas the south wind is cold in winter, because of the volume and speed of its freshness, the *tramontana* is cold in spite of its slenderness. But it is not always slender; and when your true *tramontana* is violent, when it comes witheringly in force from the snows to the sea, it is indeed the enemy, armed. It silences birds when it blows in spring, it brings dismay, and alters beauty. It is the wrinkling wind that makes the ocean look old. You cannot escape it by

going south of the sub-Alpine country. A wind like that makes nothing of distances. It turns the winter of gentle Florence to bitterness; it is unlike everything Florentine; nevertheless, it is an annual Florentine, a long visitor. It makes the Arno shudder, and ripples with rapid waves the short growths left by the summer on Fiesole and the other hills.

At Rome it finds you again, and the longer the street, after the modern manner, the keener the onslaught. You return from the usual drives, towards sunset, stiff, cheek and chin, with a Roman wind. The Campagna is struck, without any yielding of its waves of wintry green, and without the rustle of a tree. There is nothing harder than that booming blow upon the mere earth, unbroken. In its southern flight, the *tramontana* hustles through the gashes of stony Apennines, freezing the poverty of the rock villages accustomed to famine, as they cling to the steep whither the mediæval enemy had sent them scrambling, and where he could watch the people, laboriously secure, climbing the steps of their streets.

At Naples it keeps the spring back when the sun is already kindling; lemon trees shake in it and the clear southern light is strange to it. You shall not be free from it in Sicily; you must say good-bye to Italy if you would leave the *tramontana* behind. One might

wonder where, on its journey over seas, that hard wind begins to grow languid and to fail. At any point nearer than this there is no real peace between life and nature; but just beyond is the winter home of non-combatants. Failing this, there is a better truce to be had in the unsunned winter of England than in the near south. The east wind itself is less hostile than the *tramontana*, and through an ordinary island winter there are pauses, refuges, sanctuaries of great sea winds and their days. They come suddenly in mid-December, and nothing keeps them away but a long frost. They come oftener, it seems, than the *sirocco* days that are of their kin in the south.

Let the year burn and decay and be scattered, begin, quicken, flower, and fall to seed; but we, who are not annual, and have our seasons so at odds with the annual four, who may watch a spring with dying eyes, and arise to life out of illness in the reckless autumn, should be forgiven for flying the winter at its worst. It is at its work upon lives that are none of ours. We are pilgrims bound upon a different journey, aloof, alien, measurers of a different time. There is no disloyalty in shirking this inhuman wind. Little regarded by nature we must be, but we need not be enemies; and there is no living with a North Pole wind except in enmity. The tolerable winter would

be that in which the summer should but cease; one would not ask for a flower nor for anything out of due season. It is privation enough that a year should die, but would that with privation there might be peace!

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We chanced upon a prosperous hop-garden in the nearer regions of Kent, where the crop was confessed to be an unusually good one, even by the man who walked alone, softly, knee-deep in the drying hops in the oast-house – an old man, who remembered more harvests than the pickers had in their minds. He had so rustled through the hops when the drying-floors were square, and not circular, under the little conical roof, with its pointed cowl, which we all know as the normal building of the hop-garden; and in counting the hours, weighing the light hops growing lighter as the pungent little steam of the drying goes up, tending three gentle furnaces red among the red bricks, climbing up and down the three ladders to his drying-floors, he had time to think the harvest out.

We had sought a village territory, and far from the highway of the poor Londoners travelling to the south-east for their brief annual encounter with earth unpaved, unlocked, unsealed. It was less to see the street people abroad than to see the country people at home that we went hopping; to see the garden that should have been for a year the nursling of a small town, so that the hands that three times tied the searching spiral stalks in their growth should be the hands that gathered those leafy seed-pods that are

the hops. Accordingly, the people were away, and their houses closed. They had driven their babies afield in old perambulators, and with each family was a dog, very alert, and willing to help had there been opportunity, or anything whatever for a cheerfully anxious dog to do. The old children picked, the young stumbled and tottered among the bins, and the babies now and then lay crying in concert down the long alleys of yet unfallen poles. The gathering was chiefly women's work, for the men cut the plants by the roots, pulled the sticks out of the ground, lopped with a bill-hook the richly-entangled and loaded stalks that, swaying on some wind of June, had caught a neighbouring tendril by the top. The men shouldered the stick with its twines and propped it against the bins for the pickers.

Two women were to fill a bin with the random help of children who were by no means urged to work, but seemed rather to be encouraged to take the occasion in the spirit of liberty. A few elder women were at work alone. They made bins of their inverted umbrellas, and one was filling with hops a red umbrella that must have sheltered a market woman in some French country town on a Saturday. But this was the only thing that looked even fairly clean or coloured in the ranks of the village families. When was it that our population, rural and urban

alike, took this sorry custom of wearing unwashable apparel? It is but too easy to understand how the habit came to pass in the streets, under the disheartening smoke; but in the fields there used to be, at least, smock-frocks, sun-bonnets, that might pass through fresh water, and perhaps a little longer ago something more than these that was white, or light. Nothing is visible now, even with a river at hand, except the dark-dyed garments, old, and of mingled and doubtful yarn, that can undergo no kind of purification between the cheap machine that spun them and the dusthole they reach much too late. Is this no slight evil? It is impossible to follow the moral effect, it leads so far. Nor can I be pleased with the national boast that two millions of people are better washed than any of their foreign neighbours, while forty millions are less washed than any of their foreign neighbours in either hemisphere and north or south of the equator. Certain it is that the Italian whom we dare to call unclean has his poor garments washed by rows of prattling women in all the streams from the Alps to the sea.

One thing was very noticeable in the hop-garden – a cheerfulness which is certainly not common in the flowery village, where trim cottages have fallen faces behind the fuchsias in the window, and where is generally little sign of any buoyancy of human life.

Something like the natural pleasures of harvest animated the people working at the bins – they seemed satisfied with their employers, with their pay, even with the climate, which had spared them much rain during the gathering, and indeed with the whole table of entertainment visibly made ready under the skies. The women complained, with a genuine insincerity of the true maternal quality, that their children's appetites grew great in the fresh air of a long day. Simple and primitive irony – we know the note. Being happy, they were most kind, too, in speaking of the dogs, called them poor dumb creatures with the ready gush of commonplace, and told us how the house was locked up and you could not leave the dog there all alone. Being happy, too, they were courteous to their strangers, and gathered for them an armful of 'specimen' hops, as the Tuscan, who will not indulge himself so far as to eat the fruit of the vintage, presses upon you specimen grapes, and invites you to make free with his share of the divided harvest.

The humour of the hop-garden was not rich enough to go far. One brief impulse there was when a group of women, amid a few shouts of laughter, tried to seize a man and couch him in a bin upon a bed of hops. It was rather uncouth, and when they did not succeed they seemed to give up the frolic,

and little pause was made by the other workers to watch it. But when a child cried too long he was laid upon the elastic bed of gathered hops that were to soothe him to rest again. So may you see an Italian babe that does not thrive stripped of his swaddling and dipped for a moment into spirituous must. But everything was less hearty in Kent than in Tuscany, and the smell of the harvest less keen. Breathing the fragrant bitterness of the drying-floor as the slight moisture rose, one remembered the vats wherein the animating wine had slowly begun to ferment; above them the over-charged air could not long be breathed.

If the hop plant is even lovelier than the vine – and it is so inasmuch as it grows higher and more freely, with that final grace pointed against the sky which is that of the natural summit of the organic creature – the harvest leaves the hop-garden immediately desolate, and lays it waste as a vineyard is not laid waste until the foliage falls. The hop is overthrown, the leaves wither on the sticks laid in heaps, and the refuse of the pickers lies there in the disorder that we must, unluckily, confess to be English. Here again is that extremity of contrast within the unity of one complex nation which ought long ago to have put an end to all kinds of eloquence in the descriptions of the habits of a people. What in the world is neater than the English way? There is a certain kind

of neatness that causes one an appropriate sort of despair – the order of iron railings and grass hunted from the crannies of the suburbs, wrenched from the edges of the asphalt, wild-flowers mown down from a river-side road-bank. And the neatness of shops in general, but most of all of a druggist's! The labels, the sealing, the envelopes – there is nothing else quite like it. But the millions have the strangest indifference to the quality of the refuse they leave. It is much to be wished that a little civilized reserve might have been spared by the force of decivilization, so that old boots of the most degraded aspect might not be so published at random. But that decorous vanity, with every other, can hardly keep its place secure in a breast wronged by smoke and its results, clothed in old and unwashable raiment. It is not difficult to understand why the millions here, in the country of weeded roads and araucarias and expert druggists, should indifferently leave the sloughed matters of their houses, their persons, and their occupations to cumber the ways as chance will have it. Certain it is that a few days' camping of villagers at the hop-harvest leaves a ragged remainder I have never seen a trace of in the vineyards.

But the oast-house, with its beautiful ancient brick building, and the added turrets that, though newer, look well, being thick, with the large and gentle fires,

and the floor of poplar wood that bears the heat, seemed to sweeten the whole harvest. The old man showed the simple machine that presses the hops, grown almost spectral by much drying, into the canvas bags. Newer machines had been invented, he said, but this he had used all his life. It was as simple as the press that crushes grapes (again the vintage makes a parallel), and though it added something of leverage to the strength of the arm of Hercules, yet that arm was the motor, and gained power by one plain law of physics. But for the smock-frock and the sun-bonnet, and what they imply, the last hop-gathering of the nineteenth century is like a thousand hop-gatherings past.

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THE cool Julys of dark green trees and dark grey sky, which had their own long English tradition – gloomy months and fresh, and full of motion – have passed away in one of those groups of seasons that resemble each other across a year. Julys of a feather, dark or golden; and the slow flock that hovers through the century at present is one of Julys deep in sun. Little have we had of the smell of rain, little of the loaded heads of trees and flowers, or of the scattered scent of a windy pine. Where the trees and flowers stood there they breathed.

All round the cloudy heads of meadow-sweet hung an outer and invisible cloud of their innocent odours. Limes enclosed their own sequestered air, and there were caves of antique sweetness accumulated within the box-hedges of a garden that had lost its boundaries and the shape of its flower-beds, at the head of a Sussex village street over against the distant downs that look on the further sea. Raspberries, astray from what was once their place, ripened at random in all the hedges, and the air stood still round their increasing fragrance. The ashes of the privet burnt out, were yet sweet, undisturbed; and the roots of the grass smelt as dry as its flowers that were cut down in June, when they had swept a month of

breezes with their cool colours, and are now hayricks in the farms. Flashes of inaudible storms suddenly showed us the hills at night and the edges of a cloud, but the steep village, with its tiled cottages, red amid poppies, was still soft in dust and drought.

But of all the fragrant dust, none other has seemed so proper to a sunny July as did the mist of white flour in a mill away along the meadows. Alders and meadowsweet mark there the course of a narrow brook that, albeit you must stand still awhile to see that it moves, turns a roaring, a battling wheel and machinery whereof any miller might be proud. An old mill, faced and roofed deep with tiles, built of light, ancient brick, that had been plastered over with soft white and now showed through – one hardly expected to find its whitened timbers shaking to so many modern wheels. Steam and smoke, however, had no part in the work, and the brook (caught in a tiny lock) did all. Three storeys and the ground floor trembled to the machinery hurrying within the casings of wood. Great sacks of flour were thrilled, the hot air stirred in whitened sunshine, the walls hummed.

Whilst the fields of one year are ripening slowly to another harvest, the last year's wheat is passing at length through its destined degrees on the way to bread. Here are the sheaves of yester-year. One

wheel shakes the grain – clean though it looks in its splendid and glossy colour – free from the lurking odds and ends of husk that have chanced to escape the threshing; then another wheel begins to grind and the bran is rejected; another, and the rough meal is ready for brown loaves; another, and household flour for white bread. Finally the white flour is shaken through long balloons of silk and falls into trenches – the finest of the fine. And all is done within the throbbing wooden doors that the miller unbuttons one by one to show you the actions and the processes. There is one light thing that comes not among the dusty and clouded air of the mill-chambers, where all is light and delicate; and that is the dust of the world.

What is pretty to see is the pride that the machinery takes in its work. At every stage there are little exhibitions; samples of this kind of flour, examples of that; a row of neat hollows in the wood, containing specimens and making report of the work achieved. The mill stands out of the way of tourists' feet, in one of those solitudes that seem to grow more and more remote as the towns grow darker and more noisy. It is not a show-mill, and the display within its secluded, ancient walls is a country daintiness; all, indeed, is finished and made seemly for the eye. Another sense, pleased by the smell of the flour

throughout, from the first breaking of the grain to the end, has ceased to be aware, in the miller's nostrils, of this mill-odour. He lives in it and no longer knows it, he says, with his eyelashes charged and his face white with flour.

It is the sense of touch, however, that finds the interior of the mill to be a place unique. The timbers are old and polished by time, and a final most delicate finish is put upon them – smoothed already, as old marble is smoothed, in the arm of the 'Listening Slave' in the Uffizi tribune at Florence; for the nearly imperceptible meal has given a gloss to the worn oak which is the softest and driest thing in a July of ashes, pollen, and unscattered down. Your foot hardly grips the ladder, your hand the line, as you climb through the openings of those strong but tremulous floors.

The water-rat swimming on his business across the small mill-pool – the smallest mill-pool that was ever seen – had the only moisture of the burning day. The earth of the hop-gardens was so dry that the hops looked miraculous, fresh to the last tendril swinging in the brilliant air in search of a prop – lifting up the extreme bud, with nothing to spring from in the skyward action, as though it had the force of a beautiful serpent when the head hangs lifted in air. At three dates of the earlier year the

husbandman has tied the plant, and after the third ligature it has taken its own spiral way alone, with a splendid movement, aware of the light winds that help to lap the trellis of lines with the young stems. At the dry foot of the hops a weasel went undulating, with life in every wave, and a field-mouse ran. It was an arid land for them, although the trees of the wood were as fresh as streams.

Unshed were the odours of the pine. They clung to those sunny heights; the distant, misty, and indeciduous leaf held its scents as close as its shadows, between the earth and the blue. As you walked the woods, every fragrance had its own dominion unmingled, tree by warm tree, as the colours lie distinct in a motionless Mediterranean seen from a mountain. The drought looked appropriate in the cornfields with their dry colour and their dry whispers, but strange in the cool hops with their rich flower yet to come. But when you admire the wonder, you are told as usual, that although they do look well this year, there is little profit even in these gardens – and no blame to the weather – but that hops come from Belgium, and not from this Weald that looks so much more rich than any Belgian lands.

With the more regret does one hear it, as the tillage of these gardens is sometimes the only work of English husbandry that shows the continuous foster-

ing of human labour. The hop-garden is, far more than any cornfield, the nursling of the village. It is the most fostered care, the cultivated land. The poles, the little lines, the straight perspectives, draw a planned landscape amongst the straying pastures and upon the sky. Amid hop-gardens as amid vineyards, you have the sense of use, and the rays of an unveiled sun are seen to reach the aim prepared for them by man, and to strike it under his vigilant eyes. More is here than ploughing, sowing, reaping, and binding into sheaves; it is rather the nurture of a child.

Like the leafy hop-garden, every stream of this stoneless and earthy England seems to bear some witness against the vanishing agriculture: a country where, though we cry out that the rivers run lower, they yet never run dry; never dwindle to a thread of water in a torrent of grey stones on their way through river-cities, never draw a mere line of flowers and canes through the length of an arid summer garden that has all its fountains silent. It seems to be out of the power of any July, even the most brilliant of a burning band, to bar the watersheds of England; and the trees bear testimony to a land rich enough in deep waters to keep strong such oaks, and bright such beeches, and fresh such poplars as grow under no other skies. And yet to what purpose is this testi-

mony now that the cornfields grow fewer, and now that a hop-garden, prospering all it can under an unwasted sun, lying hard by the little populous village full of human health, has to yield an abundant harvest hardly worth having – what with hops from Belgium and the rest?

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The wild man is alone when he wills, and so is the man for whom civilization has been kind. But there are the multitudes to whom civilization has given little but its reaction, its rebound, its chips, its refuse, its shavings, sawdust, and waste, its failures; to them solitude is a right foregone or a luxury unattained; a right foregone, we may name it, in the case of the nearly savage, and a luxury unattained in the case of the nearly refined. Thus has the movement of the world thronged together into some blind by-way. Their share in the enormous solitude which is the common, unbounded, and virtually illimitable possession of all mankind has lapsed, unclaimed. They do not know it is theirs. Of many of their kingdoms they are ignorant, but of this most ignorant. They have not guessed that they own for every man a space inviolate, a place of unhidden liberty and of no obscure enfranchisement. They do not claim even the solitude of closed corners, the narrow privacy of the lock and key. Nor could they command so much.

For the solitude that has a sky and a horizon they do not know now how to wish. It lies in a perpetual distance. England has leagues of it, landscapes of it, verge beyond verge, a thousand thousand places in

the woods, and on uplifted hills. Or rather, solitudes are not to be measured by miles; they are to be numbered by days. They are freshly and freely the dominion of every man for the day of his possession. There is loneliness for innumerable solitaries. As many days as there are in all the ages, so many solitudes are there for men. This is the open house of the earth. No one is refused. Nor is the space shortened or the silence marred because, one by one, men in multitudes have been alone there before. Solitude is separate experience. Nay, solitudes are not to be numbered by days, but by men themselves. Every man of the living and every man of the dead might have had his 'privacy of light.'

It needs no park. It is to be found in the merest working country; and a thicket may be as secret as a forest. It is not so difficult to get for a time out of sight and earshot. Even if your solitude be enclosed, it is still an open solitude, so there be 'no cloister for the eyes,' and a space of far country or a cloud in the sky be privy to your hiding-place. But the best solitude does not hide at all. This the people who have drifted together into the streets live whole lives and never know. Do they suffer from their deprivation of even the solitude of the hiding-place? There are many who never have a whole hour alone. They live in reluctant or indifferent companionship,

as people do in a boarding-house, by paradoxical choice, familiar with one another and not intimate. They live under careless observation and subject to a cold curiosity. There is the involuntary and perhaps the unconscious loss which is futile and barren.

One knows the men, and the many women, who have sacrificed all their solitude to the perpetual society of the school, the cloister, or the hospital-ward. They walk without secrecy, candid, simple, visible, without moods, unchangeable, in a constant communication and practice of action and speech. Theirs assuredly is no barren or futile loss, and they have a conviction, and they bestow the conviction, of solitude deferred.

Who has painted solitude so that the solitary seemed to stand alone and inaccessible? There is the loneliness of the shepherdess in many a drawing of Millet. The little figure is away, aloof. The girl stands so when the painter is gone. She waits so on the sun for the closing of the hours of pasture. Millet has her as she looks, out of sight.

And, although solitude is a prepared, secured, defended, elaborate possession of the rich, they too may deny themselves the natural solitude of a woman with a child. A newly-born child is often so nursed and talked about, handled and jolted and carried about by aliens, and there is so much importunate

service going forward, that a woman is hardly alone long enough to feel, in silence and recollection, how her own blood moves separately, beside her, with another rhythm and different pulses. All is commonplace until the doors are closed upon the two. This unique intimacy is a profound retreat, an absolute seclusion. It is more than single solitude, it is a multiplied isolation more remote than mountains, safer than valleys, deeper than forests, and further than mid-sea. That solitude partaken – the only partaken solitude in the world – is the Point of Honour of ethics. Treachery to that obligation and a betrayal of that confidence might well be held to be the least pardonable of all crimes. There is no innocent sleep so innocent as sleep shared between a woman and a child, the little breath hurrying beside the longer, as a child's foot runs. But a favourite crime of the modern sentimentalist is that of a woman against her child. Her power, her intimacy, her opportunity, that should be her accusers, excuse her.

A conventional park is by no means necessary for the preparation of a country solitude. Indeed, to make those far and wide and long approaches and avenues to peace seems to be a denial of the accessibility of what should be so simple. A step, a pace or so aside, is enough to lead thither. Solitude is not for a lifetime, but for intervals. A park insists too

much, and, besides, does not insist very sincerely. In order to fulfil the apparent professions and to keep the published promise of a park, the owner thereof should be a lover of long seclusion or of a very life of loneliness. He should have gained the state of solitariness which is a condition of life quite unlike any other. The traveller who may have gone astray in countries where there is an almost life-long solitude possible is aware how invincibly apart are the lonely figures he has seen in desert places there. Their loneliness is broken by his passage, it is true, but hardly so to them. They look at him, but they are not aware that he looks at them. Nay, they look at him as though they were invisible. Their un-self-consciousness is absolute; it is in the wild degree. They are solitaries, body and soul. Even when they are curious, and turn to watch the passer-by, they are essentially alone. Now, no one ever found that attitude in a squire's figure, or that look in any country gentleman's eyes. The squire is not a life-long solitary. He never bore himself as though he were invisible. He never had the impersonal ways of a herdsman in the remoter Apennines, with a blind, blank hut in the rocks for his dwelling. Millet would not even have taken him as a model for a solitary in the briefer and milder sylvan solitudes of France. And yet nothing but a life-long, habitual,

and wild solitariness would be quite proportionate to a park of any magnitude.

If there is a look of human eyes that tells of perpetual loneliness, so there is also the familiar look that is the sign of perpetual crowds. It is the London expression, and, in its way, the Paris expression. It is the quickly caught, though not interested look, the dull but ready glance of those who do not know of their forfeited place apart; who have neither the open secret nor the close, neither liberty nor the right of lock and key; no reserve, no need of refuge, no flight nor impulse of flight; no moods but what they may brave out in the street, no hope of news from solitary counsels. Even in many men and women who have all their rights over all the solitudes – solitudes of closed doors and territorial solitudes of sward and forest – even in these who have enough solitudes to fulfil the wants of a city, even in these is found, not seldom, the look of the street.

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No woman has ever crossed the inner threshold, or shall ever cross it, unless a queen, English or foreign, should claim her privilege. Therefore, if a woman records here the slighter things visible of the monastic life, it is only because she was not admitted to see more than beautiful courtesy and friendliness were able to show her in guest-house and garden.

The Monastery is of fresh-looking Gothic, by Pugin – the first of the dynasty: it is reached by the white roads of a limestone country, and backed by a young plantation, and it gathers its group of buildings in a cleft high up among the hills of Wales. The brown habit is this, and these are the sandals, that come and go by hills of finer, sharper, and loftier line, edging the dusk and dawn of an Umbrian sky. Just such a Via Crucis climbs the height above Orta, and from the foot of its final crucifix you can see the sunrise touch the top of Monte Rosa, while the encircled lake below is cool with the last of the night. The same order of friars keep that sub-Alpine Monte Sacro, and the same have set the Kreuzberg beyond Bonn with the same steep path by the same fourteen chapels, facing the Seven Mountains and the Rhine.

Here, in North Wales, remote as the country is, with the wheat green over the blunt hill-tops, and the sky vibrating with larks, a long wing of smoke lies round the horizon. The country, rather thinly and languidly cultivated above, has a valuable subsoil, and is burrowed with mines; the breath of pit and factory, out of sight, thickens the lower sky, and lies heavily over the sands of Dee. It leaves the upper blue clear and the head of Orion, but dims the flicker of Sirius and shortens the steady ray of the evening star. The people scattered about are not mining people, but half-hearted agriculturists, and very poor. Their cottages are rather cabins; not a tiled roof is in the country, but the slates have taken some beauty with time, having dips and dimples, and grass upon their edges. The walls are all thickly whitewashed, which is a pleasure to see. How willingly would ones wish the harmless whitewash over more than half the colour – over all the chocolate and all the blue – with which the buildings of the world are stained! You could not wish for a better, simpler, or fresher harmony than whitewash makes with the slight sunshine and the bright grey of an English sky.

The grey-stone, grey-roofed monastery looks young in one sense – it is modern; and the friars look young in another – they are like their brothers

of an earlier time. No one, except the journalists of yesterday, would spend upon them those tedious words, 'quaint,' or 'old world.' No such weary adjectives are spoken here, unless it be by the excursionists.

With large aprons tied over their brown habits, the Lay Brothers work upon their land, planting parsnips in rows, or tending a prosperous bee-farm. A young friar is gaily hanging the washed linen in the sun. A printing-press, and a machine which slices turnips, are at work in an out-house, and the yard thereby is guarded by a St. Bernard, whose single evil deed was that under one of the obscure impulses of a dog's heart – atoned for by long and self-conscious remorse – he bit the poet; and tried, says one of the friars, to make doggerel of him. The poet,[1] too, lives at the monastery gates, and on monastery ground, in a seclusion which the tidings of the sequence of his editions hardly reaches. There is no disturbing renown to be got among the cabins of the Flintshire hills. Homeward, over the verge, from other valleys, his light figure flits at nightfall, like a moth.

To the coming and going of the friars, too, the village people have become well used, and the infrequent excursionists, for lack of intelligence and of

[1] Francis Thompson.

any knowledge that would refer to history, look at them without obtrusive curiosity. It was only from a Salvation Army girl that you heard the brutal word of contempt. She had come to the place with some companions, and with them was trespassing, as she was welcome to do, within the monastery grounds. She stood, a figure for Bournemouth pier, in her grotesque bonnet, and watched the son of the Umbrian saint – the friar who walks among the Giotto frescoes at Assisi and between the cypresses of Bello Sguardo, and has paced the centuries continually since the coming of the friars. One might have asked of her the kindness of a fellow-feeling. She and he alike were so habited as to show the world that their life was aloof from its 'idle business.' By some such phrase, at least, the friar would assuredly have attempted to include her in any spiritual honours ascribed to him. Or one might have asked of her the condescension of forbearance. 'Only fancy,' said the Salvation Army girl, watching the friar out of sight, 'only fancy making such a fool of oneself!'

The great hood of the friars, which is drawn over the head in Zurbaran's ecstatic picture, is turned to use when the friars are busy. As a pocket it relieves the over-burdened hands. A bottle of the local white wine, made by the brotherhood at Genoa, and sent to this house by the West, is carried in the cowl as a

present to the stranger at the gates. The friars tell how a brother resolved, at Shrovetide, to make pancakes, and not only to make, but also to toss them. Those who chanced to be in the room stood prudently aside, and the brother tossed boldly. But that was the last that was seen of his handiwork. Victor Hugo sings in 'La Légende des Siècles' of disappearance as the thing which no creature is able to achieve: here the impossibility seemed to be accomplished by quite an ordinary and a simple pancake. It was clean gone, and there was an end of it. Nor could any explanation of this ceasing of a pancake from the midst of the visible world be so much as divined by the spectators. It was only when the brother, in church, knelt down to meditate and drew his cowl about his head that the accident was explained.

Every midnight the sweet contralto bells call the community, who get up gaily to this difficult service. Of all duties this one never grows easy or familiar, and therefore never habitual. It is something to have found but one act aloof from habit. It is not merely that the friars overcome the habit of sleep. The subtler point is that they can never acquire the habit of sacrificing sleep. What art, what literature, or what life but would gain a secret security by such a point of perpetual freshness and perpetual initiative? It is not possible to get up at midnight without a

will that is new night by night. So should the writer's work be done, and, with an intention perpetually unique, the poet's.

The contralto bells have taught these Western hills the 'Angelus' of the French fields, and the hour of night – *l' ora di notte* – which rings with so melancholy a note from the village belfries on the Adriatic littoral, when the latest light is passing. It is the prayer for the dead: 'Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.'

The little flocks of novices, on paschal evenings, are folded to the sound of that evening prayer. The care of them is the central work of the monastery, which is placed in so remote a country because it is principally a place of studies. So much elect intellect and strength of heart withdrawn from the traffic of the world! True, the friars are not doing the task which Carlyle set mankind as a refuge from despair. These 'bearded counsellors of God' keep their cells, read, study, suffer, sing, hold silence; whereas they might be on the Stock Exchange, or painting Academy pictures, or making speeches, or reluctantly jostling other men for places. They might be among the involuntary busybodies who are living by futile tasks the need whereof is a discouraged fiction. There is absolutely no limit to the superfluous activities, to the art, to the literature,

implicitly renounced by the dwellers within such walls as these. None the less hopes the stranger and pilgrim to pause and knock once again upon those monastery gates.

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When Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of Monterey, once the capital of a Spanish California, he noted two new American things – a mile off, on the right, the great hotel; and, nearer at hand, on the left, the 'Christian camping-grounds,' upon which, in their winter closure, he stumbled by chance, much surprised to find anything so little sylvan in the woods. At the rising hotel our dearest author looked with a foreboding eye as at a menace to the Mexican village of little, thick, cool adobe houses humming with the sea. The Christian summer settlement did not disquiet him. But, as it falls out, the hotel has done no harm; it is the Christian camping-grounds that have by now (1902) gained upon the Latin and Indian simplicity of Monterey.

The huge wooden gabled hotel, glowing with a thousand lights, stands array in its ancient forest, of the centre whereof it has made a garden, and a most beautiful garden, rich under the boughs of the lowest-branching of forest-trees, the live-oaks, and loaded with lily, heliotrope, and rose. There the humming-bird, as blue as a peacock, purrs among scarlet flowers. Monterey, between its lagoon and its beach, has little to do with all this. But the very spirit of the suburb has taken possession of

the 'camping-grounds and Christian health-resort.' They have dropped that name, and are called with a peculiarly exact antithesis to anything Mexican, 'Pacific Grove.' And Pacific Grove, by its example, its visitors, its shops, and pavements, has brought many changes to pass in Monterey. The Mexican still 'lopes' on the roads on his high-pommelled saddle, silver-mounted – still ties his horse to the posts in the street; R. L. Stevenson's old friend the French restaurateur still hawks the tamales baked by his Indian wife; and Spanish is the language of the grass-grown village. But America is taking possession of the main street and of its side walk, and of the fronts of its houses, as she took, long ago, the land and the laws. And Pacific Grove, too near, is busy building.

Every one in England knows the street of village or little country town where the gable has been fronted with a square face, and there a line of old tiled roofs is interrupted by the tall rectangles of something modern. Much the same thing befalls the ocean village, where nothing is much more than a century old. The small wooden cottage prevails, but now and then the tall house, of wood still, but of wood disguised, is arising, out of proportion. But the little wooden cottage, too, is American; its predecessor is Mexican; the low, long house of adobe,

with its balcony, its square pillars, its long spaces of old whitewash, and the proportion and dignity of its thick, small, white, and vacant rooms.

That last visit will be paid her by the Spanish pastor who has succeeded the Jesuits (driven away by Spain) and Franciscans (driven away by Mexico), and who is tolerated by the United States in an old mission church standing with its strong belfry reflected in the seaside lake. The Indians decorated the face of the church which they also helped their Spanish pastors to build; and they paved the space in front with a pattern made of the bones of a whale slain or stranded on this beach. But, within, all the altar plate and candlesticks of beaten silver, all the vestments of seventeenth-century silk, are from Spain, the best she had to send to the savages, whether by way of Cape Horn or by a hard journey from the Atlantic coast. In the safes of the old sacristy lie the registers of that Indian flock which has since been scattered, and has died upon these innumerable hills; every baptism, every marriage, and every death under the invocation of the Saints of Spain. Near by, those who were lucky enough to die before whisky and the land-grabber brought to pass so much ruin lie in solitary graves between the lake and the woodland, the rude forefathers of a strange hamlet of mingled peoples. Change is running more swiftly now, owing

perhaps to a new State school. The daughter of a Frenchman and a pure Indian is, save for her golden skin, perfect American. She says the American *r*, which no outlander can imitate, and which is not a consonant but a kind of vowel uttered between the palate and the internal nose, and exists in no other language in the world. Nay, even the Spanish priest tries for it, as part of the English language into which he translates the Spanish notices given from the altar.

Southward, by the resounding Pacific, the littoral of soft brown hills is suddenly faced with rocks. These face the coast, and lift their heads far away in lonely islands at which the waves of the ocean-side of the earth leap in an unappeasable tumult, throwing the shadows of the brilliant sunshine upon their own foam. The cypress of California, which rather resembles a cedar, and seems to creep on hands and knees away from the ocean gales, the gnarled oak and the pine grow high above these majestic waters. And in the heart of a solitude there the belfry of the old Carmello Mission holds up its speechless bells.

★

NOTHING was ever more uncentralized than a fishing village of the Pas de Calais. Except that Paris eats its fish, and that therefore from Paris must filter down a little narrow gain – how little when it reaches the hand that set the sail is guessed from the poverty of these clambering streets – the village is separate, apart. Le Portel, in this last year of the nineteenth century, can hardly be said to read the news. A woman, trim and talkative, walks over from Boulogne in the morning with so few papers that if the vigour of her race fail her for once, and she take the little *diligence*, there is her profit gone at one blow. Her clients, moreover, are rather of the suburbs than of Le Portel itself, and if there be anywhere within the village a shop for the sale of so much as a *paroissien* in print, it must lurk in places even more unlikely than the high road. Bread, blouses, caps, have a few shops; a little meat, coffee, and wine are offered for sale to the marine people – little else. There is, indeed, that barrier to the press – a dialect that has to be reckoned with. Le Portel's language is mixed with old and alienated English – surely not because of the small intercourse with our sailors when the fishermen go to the port, but perhaps by reason of the colonizing of the coast, which the English not

only conquered, but inhabited. They were so dealt with by the plague, it is true, that not many remained to lengthen the limbs or lessen the pelvic breadth of the people; but language is of a more subtle penetration than the influence that commands the body; it prevails and clings, persists, outlives, and wears the local accent rather than die.

The road to Le Portel is nearly enough to deter the traveller, whom the most French *diligence* has attracted. Not in the remotest departments could you find an omnibus so wild. But the way lies first through the quarter devoted to the factories – the *usines* that call the regiment of young girls, marching in rows, friends ten strong, linked by the arm, daily to thirteen hours' labour. The streets of this industrial quarter of Boulogne are, like the rest, old, well-built, high-roofed, shuttered, full of character; but the factory smoke hangs about them, and between this road and that lie those damaged lands, neither free nor captive, subject to accidents of county and borough, that have everywhere been laid out by the hand that broke down the walls of cities. Then, as you climb the hill you are obliged to know that the refuse of a fishing-place is fish.

Of human beauty I think we have seen little at Le Portel, or at Boulogne, or Wimille. The people, neither dark nor fair, are of average height, and built

with a kind of stable equilibrium of figure. They have, therefore, none of that properly human look of vital insecurity. They are good for pulling. It is only in the army, levied elsewhere, that the broad hips go with narrow shoulders; the usual soldierly height seems to be that of one's tallest little girl. An English child, brilliant with joy at her first crossing of the Channel, has the darkest and the largest eyes in the coast.

★

Charles Dickens found, in the windy heights of Boulogne, a cleft suddenly soft, sheltered, green, and apparelled, full of forest trees and roses, with warm strawberries in its scarped borders. Its high sides are shadowed and sunned through leaves, while the high plateau has no shadow but that of the bird or the cloud – travellers between the sun and the vague fields of thin crops far spread. From the dust of the upland roads, from the folds of factory smoke that lap the distant quarter of Boulogne across the river, from the breath of poverty and labour in the streets where the fishermen live and the tourist comes not, this single rich ravine hides, fostering its own brightness, much like a child hiding a laugh.

Coming hither (1899) to see the place where Dickens spent those three or four summers, we found but one of the houses he lived in – the Villa du Camp de Droite – standing as it did, and fragments of the other – the Villa des Moulineaux; of this last two or three of the tiny bedrooms remain, the five summer-houses, the fountains, a broken relic of the house that so delighted him. But in the midst of the little valley has arisen a huge convent that takes the hill-side, terrace by terrace. As the portress opens for you a central door, you see a great straight stair that

scales the house as though it scaled a hill which, in fact, it does. On the upper terrace stands the Villa du Camp de Droite, intact, but changed in uses. The eighteen windows that he illuminated at a signal – posting a child or a servant at each in participation with a festival of the town – are the same in glass and shutter, but they belong now to potato-rooms, apple-rooms, and store-rooms, and, on the ground floor, to the stables of many kinds of animals. 'Two cows (for milk punch),' said Dickens; and now the nuns have a certain number of cows (not for milk punch), and all kinds of chickens.

Grown are the woods since that day; Dickens calls them young. Certain great walnut trees may be of his time, but the elms have only lately come to their full height; to apple trees one is always well inclined to entrust the past – they are the trees of the moon, and must know moons as many as the suns of the pine. Close little orchards stand on either side the Villa du Camp de Droite; and with them ends the 'sunny spot of greenery' enfolded by this small valley; thereafter begin the 'vague lands' above, and thence you see the narrow seas.

The inland view is one of several levels of climbing road, garden, and terrace – unequal heads of little hills, unequal like the heads of children that stand together. The steep roofs of the good unalterable

town – every house is well roofed, and it is a town that bears to be spied on from the heights – are in the midst, with the thin cathedral dome; 'tis but an 1820 cathedral, and looks in its tallness like mere slate and glass in comparison with the strong little close villas and well-locked walls that made an old French suburb strong. Hill is linked to hill by looped and zigzag roads, and fettered by white walls. A little lower than this silent house, in a long green walk, move the convent schoolgirls all in black, playing with a dog, or trying how croquet may be played upon the hillside, making their black bright in the intense sunlight. They have little 'confraternities' (pardon the masculine word – they are called so) among themselves, and have made their garden chapels in the summer-houses. One little room of the largest summer-house, which was used by Dickens for writing, the nuns assigned to the youngest of the little girls for their 'Confrérie de la Sainte Enfance.'

The Proprietor of the Property! When one turns to the pages dedicated to him in the 'Life' by Forster, it is hard to be reconciled to the destruction of the Villa des Moulineaux – the 'château,' as he attempted the name in the first pride of possession. 'He is such a liberal fellow,' writes Dickens, 'that I can't bear to ask for anything, since he instantly supplies it, what-

ever it is. I observed the other day in one of the side gardens a place where I thought the Comic Countryman [a name he was giving just then to his youngest boy] must infallibly trip over and make a little descent of a dozen feet. So I said, "M. Beaucourt," who instantly pulled off his cap and stood bareheaded'—and so forth. '"Then, M. Beaucourt," said I, 'I shall be glad to pay a moiety of the cost.' "Sir," said M. Beaucourt, "Never!" . . . Besides a portrait of the house in the dining-room, there is a plan of the Property in the hall. It looks about the size of Ireland; and to every one of the extraordinary objects there is a reference with some portentous name.' Those names remain, and you may still see the Bridge of Austerlitz and the Bridge of Jena, and the Bower of the Old Guard. You pass over these landmarks as you thread your way by the rich paths of fruit and flowers.

'Fancy,' says Dickens, 'what Beaucourt told me last night. When he "conceived the inspiration" of planting the Property, he went over to England to buy the trees, took a small cottage in the market gardens at Putney, lived there three months, held a symposium every night attended by the principal gardeners of Fulham, Putney, Kew, and Hammersmith, and wound up with a supper at which the market gardeners rose, clinked their glasses, and ex-

claimed with one accord (I quote him exactly), "Vive Beaucourt!" He was a captain in the National Guard, Cavaignac his general. "Brave Capitaine Beaucourt!" said Cavaignac, "you must receive a decoration," "My general," said Beaucourt, "no. It is enough for me that I have done my duty. I go to lay the first stone of a new house upon a Property I have – that house shall be my decoration!" '

Beaucourt is long dead, and the Property would look strange in the eyes of the Proprietor. He would know the garden again, but the buildings no more than he would know the property at Walworth, with the wicker fortifications – the cockney caricature into which Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, translated the idea of the French garden and bridges, the approaches and plans. To Beaucourt, familiar as he may have been with the gardeners of Putney, the English suburban cottage would have seemed strange offspring indeed of this golden garden and its white houses. In his letters Dickens was well content with nature (more or less); he prettily reports Beaucourt: 'About one hundred and fifty soldiers have been at various times billeted on Beaucourt since we have been here, and he has clinked glasses with them every one, and read a MS. book of his father's, on soldiers in general, to them all.' There is no little of this joyful banter in the Boulogne

letters, but in the novel everything is pushed many degrees further, and the burlesque becomes hearty caricature – one thing at a time and as much of it as may be; and in this, too, is art.

WITH THE VILLAGERS OF OBERAMMERGAU

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When the King of Bavaria, who was Wagner's 'genius,' gave a marble Calvary to his 'artistic and faithful Oberammergauers, they promised in return a mystery play every Sunday in summer for a named number of years. I was there in the September of 1905 – the last month of the last year of this bond. Though the King's gift had been in memory of his visit to the Passion Play, the drama that I saw enacted was not that Play, but 'The School of the Cross.' It is a series of scenes from the history of David, each one followed by a living picture of that passage in the life of Christ, of which it is held to be the type. The leader of the chorus introduces the acts by an exhortation; and this and the dialogue are written in blank verse, like the English, except that nearly every line has a dissyllabic ending. The versification is perfectly regular, the diction good. The clergy of the village have supplied this grave 'book of the words,' and no one except an Englishman, possessor of King James's version of the Bible, need complain of the quality of the paraphrase and extension of the Scripture.

Much has been said of the beauty of the Passion Play presented by simple peasant men and women

bred in a byway of Bavarian hills. But little has been reported of their simple resolution to be conventional and classical. The sign and proof of their candour is not rudeness, but a docile civility which inevitably tends to the Renaissance and to 'taste.' What seemed to me strange and interesting, and rather a pity, is to find these earnest villagers, who are a trans-alpine people and altogether German, making their hamlet subject to the tradition of a classic Italy. The proscenium is painted with a monochrome of Michelangiolo's Moses; pediment and pilasters are Italian; the attitude of the groups within is after a Milanese picture or a Tuscan; the grace is that of Raphael. We are reluctantly reminded of the drawing-master in Alfred de Musset's 'Proverbe,' who besought his pupil to make oppositions of action: 'Arrondissez-moi les bras, Mademoiselle; et ayez soin de faire des oppositions.' The head should be turned to the left whenever the feet skimmed to the right. Is not nearly the whole of Raphael there? The people of this hamlet were as convinced that art and taste dwelt beyond their dark highlands as though the second Decline and Fall – that of the art of the South – had never taken place.

The traditional grace assumed by so much humility has nothing of affectation or artifice. It is but a form of ultimate simplicity. A direct gesture, an upright

aspect, and a movement close to the heart might have been their own design; but the art that has to convey their exhortation to the world, and even, as it were, their devotion to Heaven, is (they have had the traditional hint to that effect) the art that is morally the art of arm's-length, as it is actually that of the rounded elbow. Jeremy Taylor recommends to him who prays the observance of 'the essential and ornamental measures of address'; and with both are the actors provided at Oberammergau. Their church is of a rococo character that outdoes the flutter and posture of Italy; and their theatre, which is the outer court of their church, though of graver art, still puts its trust in Italy. And, the while, the chorus-leader and David, Jonathan, Absolom, and Saul, Abiathar the priest and Sadoc, and Goliath—a noble figure – speak their deep-chested German; and over the top of the classical proscenium looks the black summit of a melancholy German mountain, clouded, and pricked with pines.

'The crucifix always enthrals me,' wrote Wagner on the day of Corpus Christi in 1859. He had just seen one in a tinsel procession in the streets of Lucerne. He had also seen the crucifixes of art, painted and graven, in all the schools – the figure crucified, and the figure to be crucified – in the Manger, at the Jordan, or in the Judgment Hall. In the valleys of

Bavaria the Crucifix stands on the approaches to the scanty fields; and on every pointed hill, set with pointed trees, stands a cross. Far to the south, where the Alps unfold, valley by valley, towards Italy, every fold enriched, and the tedious pointed trees giving place to the hand-holding, dancing mulberries and their vines; and where the mountains look to the sun, and the streams run to him; – there also, on the long road dropping, with foaming rivers, towards Italy, the new light, the cisalpine light, shines upon a thousand-fold crucifix, hooded in the hollows of the hills, and lifted as high as the eye can see.

But after the representation of the 'School of the Cross,' at Oberammergau, the images that are not living seem made in vain; and no more need be painted or graven, since the German villager held his breath for a while, or took it stealthily, in order to look like a painting of Christ. There is no other image so well worth having. There is nothing in any of the schools that so 'enthrals,' to use Wagner's word. The image at Oberammergau is a person of noble aspect. The hamlet has dedicated its most perfect man to the Passion Play and the 'School of the Cross'; and he, with the utmost simplicity, keeps his brown locks of the length chosen by the painters, and so goes about his daily work, closer to God than is

the altar crucifix, and made by German nature and Italian art in the image of Christ.

Not only in the symmetry of the Crucifixion, but in the accidents of every day, shouldering a burden, footing a rough journey in these hard hills, turning his lathe, or gathering a child upon one arm, he carries this perpetual likeness, and turns towards the world this aspect unaltered, until his years shall pass those of the Saviour, when another will take his place. The beating heart, the tide of blood move to the divine purpose, so that the image veiled or scattered among the crowd, distributed, broken, shattered, or grown dull, is gathered up in him, in order and continual consciousness.

He lives down the image made by Rembrandt for Emmaus, and that made by Tintoretto for Calvary. The art is theirs, the more than actual beauty, and genius speaks in them. But 'Ah,' the pilgrim remembers, 'there was a wild breeze in the mountains, and I saw the hair of Christ lifted, and His cincture fluttered. I saw His tired breast rise upon a breath.'

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Is anyone so courageous as to wish for a glimpse of the city and the landscape of the future, two centuries and a half hence? Even if so, he can hardly desire it so warmly as the fainter-hearted desires the sight of the past. At any rate, if there be any scene that we would willingly be admitted to see as it is to be, that scene is not in Italy.

Thither would we willingly journey not later than in the day of John Evelyn, when he travelled in his youthful dignity, provided with letters, and spent some seasons in Rome, and studied for a year at the University of Padua. Everyone knows his journal of the English Church under the Commonwealth, of the Plague, of the Fire, of the Court of Charles II. But not the least charming part of one of the most readable of books – a book written in an English prose that had not yet undergone much manipulation, but was still a little rigid, but rigid with vitality – is somewhat neglected; it is the part that records this progress through France to the Coast, and thence into Italy as far as Naples, and home by Venice, the Lakes, the Simplon Pass, and Switzerland. The happy man! When he drew near, after peril of shipwreck, to the port of Genoa, he 'perfectly smelt the joyes of Italy.' This was off the noble village of

Sampierdarena, where now you may smell the odour of factories – soap-boiling and other things – for it has come to be stifled with smoke, and the mountain gardens are dying with their blackened arbours.

'We recovered the shore, which we now kept in view within half a league, in sight of those pleasant villas, and within scent of those fragrant orchards which are on this coast, full of princely retirements for the sumptuousnesse of their buildings and noblesse of the plantations, from whence, the wind blowing as it did, might perfectly be smelt the joyes of Italy, in the perfumes of orange, citron, and jasmine flowers for divers leagues seaward.' And Evelyn was so much struck by the aura of this coast as to record it again in the dedication of his 'Fumifugium' to Charles II. What has since befallen Sanpierdarena – that one place precisely, of all others – makes the whole incident of this welcoming message from the cultivated lands, and of the ensuing treatise and its title, sound somewhat cruel in irony.

John Evelyn tried in vain to stay the approaching smoke, as he tried also – by an application to the same monarch – to avert the course of fashion in the then important dress of men. The East he thought better worth following than France, and he proposed a whole revision of the Western mode, and presented the King with a plan whereby the trivial fashions of

'the monsieurs' were to be exchanged for an Oriental 'noblesse.' Charles accepted the pamphlet, and was soon after seen to wear a Persian robe; but he rather shabbily left Evelyn to conjecture, in silence, that it was his advice that had been taken. In the end, the King slid back, and 'the monsieurs' had it. If John Evelyn had had that glimpse into the future which few of us desire to-day, how could he have endured those French inventions to which the East has now been partly converted, and the fumes of that ash-strewn piece of coast? 'But a soap-factory!' cries the English reader, seeing all kinds of happy national sarcasm in the industry that, among others, has brought about this special local change. It happens, however, pat to this matter of soap, that Evelyn makes a note to the effect that he bought in one of the towns of North Italy, certain 'wash-balls' which seemed to be new to him; he speaks of them as a useful invention. Before the factory had taken the place of the fragrant orchards the people of that coast had the constant custom of washing all their clothes. It is much to be feared that the smoke of the soap-factory has already put an end to that habit by making it too difficult, or impossible.

Some consolation is to be found in this – that if a mile of that incomparable coast is spoilt, there remain scores of miles all untouched, differing only in the

lesser majesty of the houses and gardens with their great sea-walls. The 'sumptuousnesse' admired by Evelyn will never be restored; but of the mere walls of those rougher houses, too, in their place in the landscape, pieces might be set as jewels. It was always in praise of gardens that Evelyn wrote. Otherwise the general modern complaint as to the insensibility of the older writers to the daily splendours of nature is hardly unjust in his case. He, without noting, saw the change of skies that sets alight the world when you have crossed the Alps; and of the further illumination of a southern spring he says nothing; but he makes mention of the 'extraordinary long' tail of a horse, which he saw in a collection of curiosities, nor do two horns of as many unicorns go unrecorded, for he had a grave and simple admiration of such things as petrifactions, flies in amber, and all minor marvels. Nor does he cease to be a learned and most responsible man, in whose adult but innocent style we are to see nothing contrary to the dignities of State and office. The false air of childishness which this kind of English gives to the style of Pepys always makes his public functions and honours seem to us incongruous. In Evelyn's Diary, by the way, we meet Mr. Pepys, about some Admiralty business, with so much solemnity that we hardly know him again.

It is Italy that seems (by her people) to have an air of childishness in our eyes to-day. But in those days England took frankly a lower place. It could not be otherwise, seeing that the late Renascence, as it was then in Rome, had imposed law and taste upon the whole of Europe. Evelyn had nothing whatever to be proud of at home, inasmuch as he was ashamed of York Minster, Lincoln, Durham, and the rest; inasmuch, too, as Shakespeare's name occurs not once in his book. He never doubts that modern art had reached its culmination in St. Peter's and the Lateran, in Guido Reni and Domenichino.

He found all those splendours new, and it is no wonder if he was convinced that all this art in course of progress, as it was visibly, must be better integrally than what had gone before. He took no notice of the earlier masters of any of the schools, but admired precisely as Horace Walpole admired, and on the same scale and according to the same order. He was diligent in the galleries, but the student of to-day is dismayed to see no Botticelli up or down the page, and to find the polite English traveller in rapture before the blatant Bernini.

Englishmen, in a word, paid Italy the great compliment of taking her at the highest estimation as she was at the moment. There was no painful comparison with any period of the past, for we have evidence

in his works that Bernini was not afraid of antiquity itself. In arts, in letters, in arms, in science especially, Italy was foremost in present action – *there* was her splendour, as we may find it hard to realize. Evelyn sent home preparations from her schools of anatomy to the Royal Society, to which such things were new.

And as to the gardens, happy was this traveller, who was soon after to plan the hedges and alleys of Wotton and of Sayes Court, in such a school of gardens. He had, in England, to contend with the perpetual inequalities which have hardly been sufficiently recognized as distinctive of our plains. In Italy he found the plains to be flat with that peculiar subalpine flatness, and the roads straight. Most beautiful with the mountains for a distance – but he hardly had eyes for the mountains. It is rather difficult to forgive him for calling the rocks and bays of the coast 'horrid gaps' and 'dreadful mountains'; but 'Oh, the sweet Paradise!' he cries among the fountains and the vines.

His was a clear spirit. Wherever he journeyed he went upright; and if we desire to travel with him into Italy, it is not only for the sake of his Italy but for the sake of himself. Something we would have from him in exchange for our better instruction in the 'Gotiq ordonance.'

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English bluejackets, invited to see all the spectacles of the Vatican, must themselves have been a handsome part of the show. Whether by an association of Scandinavian ideas, or for some other cause, sailors have a more northern look than other men. Or it may be that the sea wind and the sun out at sea do so burn and bleach the colour from their brown hair, as the dark locks of southern sailors could not be bleached, and take the hint of nature and make them the colour of ripe harvest, brow and hair alike. The eyes of the seafaring, too, are full of daylight, and have the open-air contraction of the pupil to a point. Fishermen of the Northumbrian coast, wearing all the colours of the August wheat, as they sit mending their nets in the sun of their brief summer, are the very representatives of seamen. One has a national sensitiveness and vanity as to the person and presence of the British Ambassadors, particularly those to Paris and Rome; and it is with some flattered feeling that one thinks of the light-eyed, light-brown men who have been the envoys of our windy littoral and northern waters to the summer shadows of St.Peter's.

As to the show of church and palace, these men of the Mediterranean Squadron were probably told that St. Peter's does not look anything like its real size,

and that this curious point of futility is a rare success. When the novelist of a day that is dead intended to draw a hero of more than common dignity, he (for the writer was as often a man as a woman) used to say that though that fortunate young man was tall, his height was not perceptible owing to the perfect proportion of every part. Even in a man, nevertheless, in whose planning no one had been known to intend a special effect of size, there is nothing indisputably fine in the mere fact of being transposed into a greater scale than that of other men. A man so built is not tall, in fact; he is large. The look of tallness comes from the slightly abnormal relative smallness of the head and the slightly abnormal relative length of the limbs. These give tall proportion, and tall proportion is the only tallness worth considering. Why there should be so general an instinctive admiration for the real tall proportion, might be rather a curious question. The normal, one would have thought, might be the ideal. But doubtless this admiration is a survival of the respect for the look of advantage in war.

Still more should he who praises a great church, the size of which has been the preoccupying project and intention of the builders, have respect to the achievement of the effect of size. It is not reasonable to praise those builders who, in fact, baffled them-

selves by producing merely a building transposed into another scale of things than the scale of man, and missed the relative greatness. That St. Peter's is thus transposed is proved by the fact that the image of the human figure which forms the accessory sculpture in the church is not upon the human scale, but enormously larger. And not only is the docile tourist called upon to admire the cherubim which hold the holy water fonts because they are babes of seven feet high, but he is required to admire them because they do not seem so. What is gained? To take infinite pains in making a thing large in order that it may not seem so is an inexplicable effort; and why was it made?

But the truth is that much of the futility of St. Peter's is due to a mere accident and to the division of counsels. Had the long perspective of St. Peter's nave been interrupted, and, as it were measured, by the plan of a Greek cross, had the great heights been more immediately perceptible, there need have been no such nimble homage exacted from the poor pilgrim. It is curious to remember how much that question was vexed in its day. Bramante first had the idea of the Greek cross. After his death Giuliano Sangallo, the Dominican Giocondo da Verona, and Raphael Sanzio were for the Latin cross. Balthasar Peruzzi, their successor in turn, was for the Greek.

Antonio Sangallo had the cross Latin again. Then came Michelangiolo Buonarroti, taking upon himself, 'for the love of God' and for no temporal rewards the construction of St. Peter's. In fifteen days, being then seventy-two years old, he had made his plans ready, and according to him the church was to have had the form of the Greek cross. It was finally Carlo Maderna who had the last decision. He wronged Michelangiolo's work within and without. For the façade was Maderna's, and the dome would not have been so jostled out of sight by the portly portico coming heavily to the front, had the church been in the form of a Greek cross, with the cupola not so far distant.

There are few other Italian cities in which the Middle Ages have been thus effaced. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries do so impose themselves in Rome as to leave but some three towers of the beautiful earlier Italian order. 'This is a church of extraordinary devotion,' says John Evelyn of the Lateran as it was in the seventeenth century, 'though for outward forme not comparable to St. Peter's, being of Gotiq ordonance.' Very little of 'Gotiq ordonance' in Rome had remained so late as the date of John Evelyn. And there is something to respect as well as to marvel at in the assurance of those sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which so swept the way for

themselves, rebuilt, retricked, recast, swaggered, and flourished upon their faith in their present. Theirs was no modern misgiving of heart. They did us indeed an ill turn, for they shouldered out of our sight and threw down much that our backward-turning eyes wish to rest upon; but we are avenged upon them by the simple mere passage of time – by the inevitable fact that their present, which was indeed so present, has become a past and has no world at its feet. Their work in Rome has become in our eyes importunate and dull. But for those three towers and one or two mosaics, and here and there some relic of the 'dark ages,' Rome is decorated and gilded, and her thousand altars dressed, after one pattern. This monotony, which has destroyed so much history, is itself historical. It proves the ages of confidence, and these cannot set their mark without effacing the marks and signs of other times.

No world now at the feet of those triumphant ages, did I say? Yes, there is an elderly Italy that enormously admires them, and hardly thinks there is art or beauty elsewhere in history. The tradition of this faith is a young tradition belated, gone astray, left behind among the old. It is not venerable. You can imagine an old love for the Middle Ages that would be answerable, spirit and time. But an old love for the last, topmost posture of the flying Renascence is

not quite respectable; it makes a rather frisky kind of orthodoxy, and, as it were, stiffens the dogmatic mind in the windy attitudes of Bernini's statues. People who might be reproving the young for their lack of severity in art are themselves grey in laxity, and shocked that their corruptions – their broken pediments, their stucco, their storm-tossed ecclesiastical vestments – should be refused or questioned.

And yet, again, to call this Roman art young is not exact, if to youth we may attribute the sweet action of deference to time and to coming change – the virtue, in fact, of human hope. Bernini deferred nothing. Maderno had no approaches or tendencies to entrust to the future, no buds, nothing to be solved. The portico of St. Peter's seems to take its position, thick, stolid, and final, seated upon the hill of South-European history.

VERSES

*

A voice peals in this end of night
  A phrase of notes resembling stars,
Single and spiritual notes of light.
  What call they at my window-bars?
    The South, the past, the day to be,
    An ancient infelicity.

Darkling, deliberate, what sings
  This wonderful one, alone, at peace?
What wilder things than song, what things
  Sweeter than youth, clearer than Greece,
    Dearer than Italy, untold
    Delight, and freshness centuries old?

And first first-loves, a multitude,
  The exaltation of their pain;
Ancestral childhood long renewed;
  And midnights of invisible rain;
    And gardens, gardens, night and day,
    Gardens and childhood all the way.

What Middle Ages passionate,
  O passionless voice! What distant bells
Lodged in the hills, what palace state
  Illyrian! For it speaks, it tells,
    Without desire, without dismay,
    Some morrow and some yesterday.

All-natural things! But more – whence came
  This yet remoter mystery?
How do these starry notes proclaim
  A graver still divinity?
    This hope, this sanctity of fear?
    O innocent throat! O human ear!

A DEAD HARVEST

(In Kensington Gardens)

*

Along the graceless grass of town
They rake the rows of red and brown, –
Dead leaves, unlike the rows of hay
Delicate, touched with gold and grey,
Raked long ago and far away.

A narrow silence in the park,
Between the lights a narrow dark.
One street rolls on the north; and one,
Muffled, upon the south doth run;
Amid the mist the work is done.

A futile crop! – for it the fire
Smoulders and, for a stack, a pyre.
So go the town's lives on the breeze,
Even as the sheddings of the trees,
Bosom nor barn is filled with these.

★

Another day awakes. And who –
Changing the world – is this?
He comes at whiles, the winter through
West Wind! I would not miss
His sudden tryst: the long, the new
Surprises of his kiss.

Vigilant, I make haste to close
With him who comes my way.
I go to meet him as he goes;
I know his note, his lay,
His colour and his morning-rose,
And I confess his day.

My window waits; at dawn I hark
His call; at morn I meet
His haste around the tossing park
And down the softened street;
The gentler light is his; the dark,
The grey – he turns it sweet.

So too, so too, do I confess
My poet when he sings.
He rushes on my mortal guess
With his immortal things.
I feel, I know him. On I press –
He finds me 'twixt his wings.

NOVEMBER BLUE

*

'*The golden tint of the electric lights seems to give a complementary colour to the air in the early evening.*'– ESSAY ON LONDON.

O HEAVENLY colour, London town
  Has blurred it from her skies;
And, hooded in an earthly brown,
  Unheaven'd the city lies.
No longer standard-like this hue
  Above the broad road flies;
Nor does the narrow street the blue
  Wear, slender pennon-wise.

But when the gold and silver lamps
  Colour the London dew,
And, misted by the winter damps,
  The shops shine bright anew –
Blue comes to earth, it walks the street,
  It dyes the wide air through;
A mimic sky about their feet,
  The throng go crowned with blue.

'RIVERS UNKNOWN TO SONG'

JAMES THOMSON

★

Wide waters in the waste; or, out of reach,
Rough Alpine falls where late a glacier hung;
Or rivers groping for the alien beach,
Through continents, unsung.

Nay, not these nameless, these remote, alone;
But all the streams from all the watersheds –
Peneus, Danube, Nile – are the unknown,
Young in their ancient beds.

Man has no tale for them. O travellers swift
From secrets to oblivion! Waters wild
That pass in act to bend a flower or lift
The bright limbs of a child!

For they are new, they are fresh; there's no surprise
Like theirs on earth. O strange for evermore!
This moment's Tiber with his shining eyes
Never saw Rome before.

Man has no word for their eternity –
Rhine, Avon, Arno, younglings, youth uncrowned:
Ignorant, innocent, instantaneous, free.
Unwelcomed, unrenowned.

THE VOICE OF A BIRD

'He shall rise up at the Voice of a Bird'
ECCLESIASTES

*

Who then is 'he'?
Dante, Keats, Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley; all
Rose in their greatness at the shrill decree,
The little rousing inarticulate call.
For they stood up
At the bird-voice, of lark, of nightingale,
Drank poems from that throat as from a cup.
Over the great world's notes did these prevail.

And not alone
The signal poets woke. In listening man,
Woman, and child, a poet stirs unknown,
Throughout the Mays of birds since Mays began.

He rose, he heard –
Our father, our St. Peter, in his tears –
The crowing, twice, of the prophetic bird,
The saddest cock-crow of our human years.

★

Autumn is weary, halt, and old;
Ah, but she owns the song of joy!
Her colours fade, her woods are cold.
Her singing-bird's a boy, a boy.

In lovely Spring the birds were bent
On nests, on use, on love forsooth!
Grown-up were they. This boy's content,
For his is liberty, his is youth.

The musical stripling sings for play
Taking no thought, and virgin-glad.
For duty sang those mates in May.
This singing-bird's a lad, a lad.

THE JOYOUS WANDERER

Translated from M. Catulle Mendès

*

I go by road, I go by street –
Lira, la, la!
O white high roads, ye know my feet!
A loaf I carry and, all told,
Three broad bits of lucky gold –
Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart,
(Sing, dear nightingale!) is my Sweet.

A poor man met me and begged for bread –
Lira, la, la!
'Brother, take all the loaf,' I said,
I shall go with lighter cheer –
Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, sweet nightingale!) is my Dear.

A thief I met on the lonely way –
Lira, la, la!
He took my gold; I cried to him, 'Stay!
And take my pocket and make an end.'
Lira, la, la!
And oh, within my flowering heart
(Sing, soft nightingale!) is my Friend.

Now on the plain I have met with death –
Lira, la, la!
My bread is gone, my gold, my breath.
But oh, this heart is not afraid –
Lira, la, la!
For oh, within this lonely heart
(Sing, sad nightingale!) is my Maid.

*

THERE'S much afoot in heaven and earth this year;
The winds hunt up the sun, hunt up the moon,
Trouble the dubious dawn, hasten the drear
Height of a threatening noon.

No breath of boughs, no breath of leaves, of fronds
May linger or grow warm; the trees are loud;
The forest, rooted, tosses in his bonds,
And strains against the cloud.

No scents may pause within the garden-fold;
The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells;
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold
Wild honey to cold cells.

*

A FLOCK of winds came winging from the North,
Strong birds with fighting pinions driving forth
With a resounding call: –

Where will they close their wings and cease their cries –
Between what warming seas and conquering skies –
And fold, and fall?

THE WIND IS BLIND

'Eyeless, in Gaza, at the Mill, with Slaves.'

MILTON

The wind is blind.
The earth sees sun and moon; the height
Is watch-tower to the dawn; the plain
Shines to the summer; visible light
Is scattered in the drops of rain.

The wind is blind.
The flashing billows are aware;
With open eyes the cities see;
Light leaves the ether, everywhere
Known to the homing bird and bee,

The wind is blind,
Is blind alone. How has he hurled
His ignorant lash, his aimless dart,
His eyeless rush upon the world,
Unseeing, to break his unknown heart!

The wind is blind,
And the sail traps him, and the mill
Captures him; and he cannot save
His swiftness and his desperate will
From those blind uses of the slave.

★

Thou art the Way.
Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal
I cannot say
If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

I cannot see –
I, child of process – if there lies
An end for me,
Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach
The road that winds, my feet that err.
Access, approach
Art Thou, Time, Way, and Wayfarer.

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50. IN DEFENCE OF WOMEN
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'All I design by the book is to set down in more or less plain form certain ideas that practically every civilized man and woman holds *in petto*, but that have been concealed hitherto by the vast mass of sentimentalities swathing the whole woman question.' *From the Author's Introduction*

51. VIENNESE MEDLEY A Novel
by Edith O'Shaughnessy

¶ 'It is told with infinite tenderness, with many touches of grave or poignant humour, in a very beautiful book, which no lover of fiction should allow to pass unread. A book which sets its writer definitely in the first rank of living English novelists.'
Sunday Times

53. THE INFAMOUS JOHN FRIEND
by Mrs. R. S. Garnett

¶ This book, though in form an historical novel, claims to rank as a psychological study. It is an attempt to depict a character which, though destitute of the common virtues of every-day life, is gifted with qualities that compel love and admiration.

54. HORSES AND MEN
by Sherwood Anderson

¶ '*Horses and Men* confirms our indebtedness to the publishers who are introducing his work here. It has a unity beyond that of its constant Middle-west setting. A man of poetic vision, with an intimate knowledge of particular conditions of life, here looks out upon a world that seems singularly material only because he unflinchingly accepts its actualities.' *Morning Post*

55. SELECTED ESSAYS
by Samuel Butler

¶ This volume contains the following essays:

The Humour of Homer
Quis Desiderio . . .?
Ramblings in Cheapside
The Aunt, the Nieces, and the Dog
How to Make the Best of Life
The Sanctuary of Montrigone
A Medieval Girls' School
Art in the Valley of Saas
Thought and Language

56. A POET'S PILGRIMAGE
by W. H. Davies

¶ *A Poet's Pilgrimage* recounts the author's impressions of his native Wales on his return after many years' absence. He tells of a walking tour during which he stayed in cheap rooms and ate in the small wayside inns. The result is a vivid picture of the Welsh people, the towns and countryside.

57. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. First Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Most books written about Japan have been superficial sketches of a passing traveller. Of the inner life of the Japanese we know practically nothing, their religion, superstitions, ways of thought. Lafcadio Hearn reveals something of the people and their customs as they are.

58. GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN. Second Series
by Lafcadio Hearn

¶ Sketches by an acute observer and a master of English prose, of a Nation in transition—of the lingering remains of Old Japan, to-day only a memory, of its gardens, its beliefs, customs, gods and devils, of its wonderful kindliness and charm—and of the New Japan, struggling against odds towards new ideals.

59. THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO
Edited by Manuel Komroff

¶ When Marco Polo arrived at the court of the Great Khan, Pekin had just been rebuilt. Kublai Khan was at the height of his glory. Polo rose rapidly in favour and became governor of an important district. In this way he gained first-hand knowledge of a great civilization and described it with astounding accuracy and detail.

60. SELECTED PREJUDICES. Second Series
by H. L. Mencken

¶ 'What a master of the straight left in appreciation! Everybody who wishes to see how common sense about books and authors can be made exhilarating should acquire this delightful book."
Morning Post

61. THE WORLD'S BACK DOORS
by Max Murray
With an introduction by HECTOR BOLITHO

¶ This book is not an account so much of places as of people. The journey round the world was begun with about enough money to buy one meal, and continued for 66,000 miles. There are periods as a longshore man and as a sailor, and a Chinese guard and a night watchman, and as a hobo.

62. THE EVOLUTION OF AN INTELLECTUAL
by J. Middleton Murry

¶ These essays were written during and immediately after the Great War. The author says that they record the painful stages by which he passed from the so-called intellectual state to the state of being what he now considers to be a reasonable man.

63. THE RENAISSANCE
by Walter Pater

¶ This English classic contains studies of those 'supreme artists,' Michelangelo and Da Vinci, and of Botticelli, Della Robia, Mirandola, and others, who 'have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere.' There is no romance or subtlety in the work of these masters too fine for Pater to distinguish in superb English.

64. THE ADVENTURES OF A WANDERER
by Sydney Walter Powell

¶ Throwing up a position in the Civil Service in Natal because he preferred movement and freedom to monotony and security, the author started his wanderings by enlisting in an Indian Ambulance Corps in the South African War. Afterwards he wandered all over the world.

65. 'RACUNDRA'S' FIRST CRUISE
by Arthur Ransome

¶ This is the story of the building of an ideal yacht which would be a cruising boat that one man could manage if need be, but on which three people could live comfortably. The adventures of the cruise are skilfully and vividly told.

66. THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN
by Winwood Reade

¶ 'Few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced me very strongly is *The Martyrdom of Man*. This "dates," as people say nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own; but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process.' *H. G. Wells* in *The Outline of History*

67. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD
With an introduction by H. W. MASSINGHAM

¶ Because of its honesty, delicacy and simplicity of portraiture, this book has always had a curious grip upon the affections of its readers. An English Amiel, inheriting to his comfort an English Old Crome landscape, he freed and strengthened his own spirit as he will his reader's.

68. THE DELIVERANCE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ Once read, Hale White [Mark Rutherford] is never forgotten. But he is not yet approached through the highways of English letters. To the lover of his work, nothing can be more attractive than the pure and serene atmosphere of thought in which his art moves.

69. THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE
by Mark Rutherford

¶ 'Since Bunyan, English Puritanism has produced one imaginative genius of the highest order. To my mind, our fiction contains no more perfectly drawn pictures of English life in its recurring emotional contrast of excitement and repose more valuable to the historian, or more stimulating to the imaginative reader.' *H. W. Massingham*

70. ASPECTS OF SCIENCE. First Series
by J. W. N. Sullivan

¶ Although they deal with different aspects of various scientific ideas, the papers which make up this volume do illustrate, more or less, one point of view. This book tries to show one or two of the many reasons why science may be interesting for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are.

71. MASTRO-DON GESUALDO
Giovanni Verga. Translated by D. H. Lawrence

¶ Verga, who died in 1922, is recognized as one of the greatest of Italian writers of fiction. He can claim a place beside Hardy and the Russians. 'It is a fine full tale, a fine, full picture of life, with a bold beauty of its own which Mr. Lawrence must have relished greatly as he translated it.' *Observer*

72. THE MISSES MALLETT
by E. H. Young

¶ The virtue of this quiet and accomplished piece of writing lies in its quality and in its character-drawing; to summarize it would be to give no idea of its charm. Neither realism nor romance, it is a book by a writer of insight and sensibility.

73. SELECTED ESSAYS. First Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ 'The prose of Sir Edmund Gosse is as rich in the colour of young imagination as in the mellow harmony of judgment. Sir Edmund Gosse's literary kit-kats will continue to be read with avidity long after the greater part of the academic criticism of the century is swept away upon the lumber-heap.' *Daily Telegraph*

74. WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS
by Christopher Morley

¶ A delicious satirical fantasy, in which humanity wears a dog-collar.

'Mr. Morley is a master of consequent inconsequence. His humour and irony are excellent, and his satire is only the more salient for the delicate and ingenuous fantasy in which it is set.' *Manchester Guardian*

76. CONFESSIONS OF A YOUNG MAN
by George Moore

¶ 'Mr. Moore, true to his period and to his genius, stripped himself of everything that might stand between him and the achievement of his artistic object. He does not ask you to admire this George Moore. He merely asks you to observe him beyond good and evil as a constant plucked from the bewildering flow of eternity.' *Humbert Wolfe*

77. THE BAZAAR. Stories
by Martin Armstrong

¶ 'These stories have considerable range of subject, but in general they are stay-at-home tales, depicting cloistered lives and delicate finely fibred minds. . . . Mr. Armstrong writes beautifully.' *Nation and Athenæum*

78. SIDE SHOWS. Essays
by J. B. Atkins
With an Introduction by JAMES BONE

¶ Mr. J. B. Atkins was war correspondent in four wars, the London editor of a great English paper, then Paris correspondent of another, and latterly the editor of the *Spectator*. His subjects in *Side Shows* are briefly London and the sea.

79. SHORT TALKS WITH THE DEAD
by Hilaire Belloc

¶ In these essays Mr. Belloc attains his usual high level of pungent and witty writing. The subjects vary widely and include an imaginary talk with the spirits of Charles I, the barber of Louis XIV, and Napoleon, Venice, fakes, eclipses, Byron, and the famous dissertation on the Nordic Man.

80. ORIENT EXPRESS
by John dos Passos

¶ This book will be read because, as well as being the temperature chart of an unfortunate sufferer from the travelling disease, it deals with places shaken by the heavy footsteps of History, manifesting itself as usual by plague, famine, murder, sudden death and depreciated currency. Underneath the book is an ode to railroad travel.

81. SELECTED ESSAYS. Second Series
by Sir Edmund Gosse, C.B.

¶ A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ 'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*

84. SMOKE
by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

¶ In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale
by du Bose Heyward

¶ This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH
by Sisley Huddleston

¶ 'There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopædia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta
by Naomi Mitchison

¶ 'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS
by Stephen Graham

¶ In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT
by Christopher Morley

¶ 'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE
by Somerset Maugham

¶ A remarkable picture of a genius.
'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE
by W. Somerset Maugham

¶ Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

93. A POOR MAN'S HOUSE
by Stephen Reynolds

¶ Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' *Joseph Conrad*

94. WILLIAM BLAKE
by Arthur Symons

¶ When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

95. A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND
by Edward Thomas

¶ A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

96. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE
by The Earl of Rosebery

¶ Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

97. THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR
Compiled by Edward Thomas

¶ This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

98. SAFETY PINS: ESSAYS
by Christopher Morley
With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

¶ Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the rôle of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought.

99. THE BLACK SOUL: A Novel
by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ '*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' "Æ" in *The Irish Statesman*

100. CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER: A Novel
by H. G. Wells

¶ 'At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*

'Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

102. THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS
by J. C. Squire

¶ Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Verse*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

103. ORIENTAL ENCOUNTERS
by Marmaduke Pickthall

¶ In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier manhood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really bridges the racial gulf.

105. THE MOTHER: A Novel
by Grazia Deledda
With an introduction by D. H. LAWRENCE

¶ An unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilized and superstitious. The action of the story takes place so rapidly and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

106. TRAVELLER'S JOY: An Anthology
by W. G. Waters

¶ This anthology has been selected for publication in the Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

107. SHIPMATES: Essays
by Felix Riesenberg

¶ A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters.

108. THE CRICKET MATCH
by Hugh de Selincourt

¶ Through the medium of a cricket match the author endeavours to give a glimpse of life in a Sussex village. First we have a bird's-eye view at dawn of the village nestling under the Downs; then we see the players awaken in all the widely different circumstance of their various lives, pass the morning, assemble on the field, play their game, united for a few hours, as men should be, by a common purpose—and at night disperse.

109. RARE ADVENTURES AND PAINEFULL PEREGRINATIONS (1582–1645)
by William Lithgow
Edited, and with an Introduction by B. I. LAWRENCE

¶ This is the book of a seventeenth-century Scotchman who walked over the Levant, North Africa and most of Europe, including Spain, where he was tortured by the Inquisition. An unscrupulous man, full of curiosity, his comments are diverting and penetrating, his adventures remarkable.

110. THE END OF A CHAPTER
by Shane Leslie

¶ In this, his most famous book, Mr. Shane Leslie has preserved for future generations the essence of the pre-war epoch, its institutions and individuals. He writes of Eton, of the Empire, of Post-Victorianism, of the Politicians. . . . And whatever he touches upon, he brilliantly interprets.

111. SAILING ACROSS EUROPE
by Negley Farson
With an Introduction by FRANK MORLEY

¶ A voyage of six months in a ship, its one and only cabin measuring 8 feet by 6 feet, up the Rhine, down the Danube, passing from one to the other by the half-forgotten Ludwig's Canal. To think of and plan such a journey was a fine imaginative effort and to write about it interestingly is no mean accomplishment.

112. MEN, BOOKS AND BIRDS—Letters to a friend
by W. H. Hudson
With Notes, some Letters, and an Introduction by MORLEY ROBERTS

¶ An important collection of letters from the naturalist to his friend, literary executor and fellow-author, Morley Roberts, covering a period of twenty-five years.

113. PLAYS ACTING AND MUSIC
by Arthur Symons

¶ This book deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. Mr. Arthur Symons shows how each art has its own laws, its own limits; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art, it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

114. ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS
by Edith Wharton

¶ Mrs. Wharton's perception of beauty and her grace of writing are matters of general acceptance. Her book gives us pictures of mountains and rivers, monks, nuns and saints.

115. FLOWERS AND ELEPHANTS
by Constance Sitwell. With an Introduction by E. M. Forster

¶ Mrs. Sitwell has known India well, and has filled her pages with many vivid little pictures, and with sounds and scents. But it is the thread on which her impressions are strung that is so fascinating, a thread so delicate and rare that the slightest clumsiness in definition would snap it.

116. THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES: and Other Plays of the Sea
by Eugene O'Neill. With an Introduction by St. John Ervine

¶ 'Mr. O'Neill is immeasurably the most interesting man of letters that America has produced since the death of Walt Whitman.' *From the Introduction.*

117. BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY. Stories of Gypsies
by Konrad Bercovici. With an Introduction by A. E. Coppard

¶ Konrad Bercovici, through his own association with gipsies, together with a magical intuiton of their lives, is able to give us some unforgettable pictures of those wanderers who, having no home anywhere, are at home everywhere.

118. THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS
by George Douglas. With an Introduction by J. B. Priestley

¶ This powerful and moving story of life in a small Scots burgh is one of the grimmest studies of realism in all modern fiction. The author flashes a cold and remorseless searchlight upon the backbitings, jealousies, and intrigues of the townsfolk, and his story stands as a classic antidote to the sentimentalism of the kailyard school.

119. FRIDAY NIGHTS
by Edward Garnett

¶ 'Mr. Garnett is "the critic as artist," sensitive alike to elemental nature and the subtlest human variations. His book sketches for us the possible outlines of a new humanism, a fresh valuation of both life and art.' *The Times.*

120. DIVERSIONS IN SICILY
by Henry Festing Jones

¶ Shortly before his sudden and unexpected death, Mr. Festing Jones chose out *Diversions in Sicily* for reprinting in the Travellers' Library from among his three books of mainly Sicilian sketches and studies. These chapters, as well as any that he wrote, recapture the wisdom, charm, and humour of their author.

121. DAYS IN THE SUN: A Cricketer's Book.
by Neville Cardus.

¶ These sketches were first published in *A Cricketer's Book* (1922) and in *Days in the Sun* (1924), they have now been revised for re-issue in *The Travellers' Library*. The author says 'the intention of this book is modest – it should be taken as a rather freely compiled journal of happy experiences which have come my way on our cricket fields.'

122. COMBED OUT
by F. A. Voigt

¶ This account of life in the army in 1917–18 both at home and in France is written with a telling incisiveness. The author does not indulge in an unnecessary word, but packs in just the right details with an intensity of feeling that is infectious.

123. CONTEMPORARIES OF MARCO POLO
edited by Manuel Komroff

¶ This volume comprises the Travel Records in the Eastern parts of the world of William of Rubruck (1253–1255), the Journey of John of Pian de Carpini (1245–1247), the Journey of Friar Odoric (1318–1330). They describe the marvels and wonders of Asia under the Khans.

124. TENNYSON
by Hugh I'Anson Fausset

¶ Mr. Fausset's study of Tennyson's qualities as poet, man, and moralist is by implication a study of some of the predominant characteristics of the Victorian age. His book, however, is as pictorial as it is critical, being woven, to quote *The Times*, 'like an arras of delicate colour and imagery.'

125. CAPTIVES OF TIPU: SURVIVORS' NARRATIVES
edited by A. W. Lawrence

¶ Three records of heroic endurance, which were hitherto unobtainable at a reasonable price. In addition to the well-known stories of Bristow and Scurry, a soldier and a seaman, who were forcibly Mohammedanized and retained in the service of Mysore till their escape after ten years, extracts are given from an officer's diary of his close imprisonment at Seringapatam.

126. MEMOIRS OF A SLAVE-TRADER
by Theodore Canot. Set down by Brantz Mayer and now edited by A. W. Lawrence

¶ In 1854 a cosmopolitan adventurer, who knew Africa at the worst period of its history, dictated this sardonic account of piracy and mutiny, of battles with warships or rival traders, and of the fantastic lives of European and half-caste slavers on the West Coast.

127. BLACK LAUGHTER
by Llewelyn Powys. Author of *Skin for Skin*, etc.

¶ *Black Laughter* is a kind of *Robinson Crusoe* of the continent of Africa. Indeed, Llewelyn Powys resembles Daniel Defoe in the startlingly realistic manner in which he conveys the actual feelings of the wild places he describes. You actually share the sensations of a sensitive and artistic nature suddenly transplanted from a peaceful English village into the heart of Africa.

128. THE INFORMER
by Liam O'Flaherty. Author of *Spring Sowing*, etc.

¶ This realistic novel of the Dublin underworld is generally conceded to be Mr. O'Flaherty's most outstanding book. It is to be produced as a film by British International Pictures, who regard it as one of the most ambitious of their efforts.

129. THE BEADLE. A novel of South Africa
by Pauline Smith. Author of *The Little Karoo*

¶ 'A story of great beauty, and told with simplicity and tenderness that makes it linger in the memory. It is a notable contribution to the literature of the day.' *Morning Post.*

130. FISHMONGER'S FIDDLE. Short Stories
by A. E. Coppard. Author of *The Black Dog*, *Silver Circus*, etc.

¶ 'In definite colour and solid strength his work suggests that of the old Dutch Masters. Mr. Coppard is a born story-teller.' *Times Literary Supplement.*

132. WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS
by The Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald

¶ Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has been a wide traveller and reader, and has an uncommon power of bringing an individual eye – the eye of the artist – to bear upon whatever he sees.

133. WAYFARING
by Alice Meynell

¶ 'Her essays have the merit of saying just enough of the subject, and they can be read repeatedly. The surprise coming from that combined grace of manner and sanity of thought is like one's dream of what the recognition of a new truth would be.' Some of the essays, so described by George Meredith, are here collected in book-form for the first time.

134. MILITARY MEMOIRS (1672–1713)
by Captain George Carleton. Edited by A. W. Lawrence

¶ A cheerful sidelight on the war of the Spanish Succession, with a remarkable literary history. Johnson praised the book, Scott edited it, and then the critics declared it to be fiction and suggested Defoe or Swift as the author; now it has come into its own again as one of the most vivid records of a soldier's actual experiences.

135. BOOKS AND AUTHORS
by Robert Lynd

¶ Critical essays on great writers of modern and other times. Among the modern writers we have appreciations of Mr. Max Beerbohm, Mr. Arnold Bennett and Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, while Herrick, Keats, Charles Lamb and Hawthorne are a few of the classical writers who are criticised in the book.

136. A GIPSY OF THE HORN
by Rex Clements

¶ A true and spirited account of a phase of sea-life now passing, if not passed, fascinating from the very vividness and sincerity of its telling. Mr. Clements loves the sea, and he makes his readers love it.

137. THE CRIMSON HANDKERCHIEF, and Other Stories
by Comte de Gobineau
Translated from the French by Henry Longan Stuart

¶ The three stories included in this volume mark the flood tide of Comte de Gobineau's unique and long-neglected genius. Not even Nietzsche has surpassed him in a love of heroic characters and unfettered wills – or in his contempt for bourgeois virtues and vices.

138. A COTSWOLD VILLAGE
by J. Arthur Gibbs

¶ 'For pure observation of people, places and sports, occupations and wild life, the book is admirable. Everything is put down freshly from the notebook, and has not gone through any deadening process of being written up. There are stories, jokes, snatches of conversation, quotations from old diaries, odds and ends of a hundred kinds about squires, gamekeepers, labourers and their wives. Mr. Gibbs had a real gift for writing which was in keeping with his own frank, open-air nature.'
Morning Post.

139. A NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHILDHOOD
by Mary MacCarthy

140. MORE OBITER DICTA
by Augustine Birrell

Note

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